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The Week

WHAT appeared to be ominous war clouds gathered over Europe this week as the threat of an oil embargo by the League of Nations provoked demonstrations of extreme belligerency on the part of Italy. Mussolini canceled all leaves of soldiers previously ordered home to assist in farming, reversed his recent peaceful gesture by sending more troops into Libya, and in speeches and statements defied the world in general and the League and Great Britain in particular. Behind the scenes, however, there was a tendency to minimize the war danger, and to regard Mussolini's moves as necessary face-saving opening the Nazi Winter Propaganda campaign by Great Britain, France and Italy. The surface tension was strong enough to bring from France an open declaration that she would aid Great Britain in case of attack by Italy, and this evidence of renewed cordiality between Britain and France was regarded as of some importance in the general realignment of forces now going on in Europe. The League Council of Eighteen is scheduled to meet on December 12, and the present indications are that an oil embargo will be voted, with a loophole, however, permitting negotiations with Italy that would delay the effective date for the embargo. In Ethiopia, the Italian armies appeared to be meeting some reverses, particularly Ethiopian raids against lines of communication, and the arrival of General Badoglio to take command was accompanied by the imposition of a rigorous military censorship.

OPENING of the French Parliament on Thursday was accompanied by a heavy rain that was credited with blocking expected demonstrations and possible riots by sympathizers of the right and left. Premier Laval managed to muster a small majority for maintaining the gold parity of the franc, and thus for his own ministry. Apparently the ultimate necessity for devaluing the franc is widely recognized in France, but no party wants to take political responsibility for the move. A leftist victory was registered last week in New Zealand, where a general election brought into power a Labor-Socialist government with a program for government control of credit and finance, extensive public works, unemployment relief and social services, and government control of wages. Revolt flared up in Brazil last week and was put down by government troops under President Vargas after several days' fighting that resulted in a loss of 100 lives. Vargas branded the revolt "Communistic," but as a matter of fact the rebels were asking for such things as an eight-hour day, child-labor laws and unemployment insurance, which amounted to virtually the identical program on which Vargas himself seized power in 1930.

EVIDENCE accumulated during the week to show that Hitler's grip on Germany may be approaching its end. In a Berlin speech before 20,000 people,

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self-sufficiency of Germany. The very mention of these topics was an admission of the existence of a ponderable opposition in spite of the harshest repressive measures, and of an unofficial world boycott of Germany caused by Nazi policies. Significant were the reactions to this speech. Hitler's reference to the wiping out of Marxism brought a sprinkle of applause; his reference to the anti-Jewish campaign brought one lone handclap; while his reference to rearmament brought the audience to its feet, cheering. There are signs that the real rulers of Germany now feel that Hitler has accomplished what was for them his historic mission—the breaking of the Versailles Treaty and the reconstituting of Germany as a nation in arms. Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Finance Minister, again this week continued his increasingly open attacks on Nazi extremist policies, and both the Protestant and Catholic churches showed defiance of Nazi coercion. What nationalist Germany vitally needs today is world credit and a more favorable world opinion while she completes her rearmament program. If Hitler is deemed to stand in the way, the ruling interests that made it possible for him to come to power may see to his removal.

GOVERNMENT finances received a major share of public attention in the United States this week. President Roosevelt in his "homecoming" speech at Atlanta on Friday announced that the peak of federal spending had been passed and would decrease from now on, and also took occasion to point out that although the public debt during his administration had increased from $21,000,000,000 to $29,500,000,000, these figures included $1,500,000,000 in cash on hand and $4,500,000,000 in recoverable assets, thus making the net increase approximately equal to the increase in the public debt during President Hoover's administration. On the same day it was announced from Washington that the federal dole was ended, and the twenty-two states still receiving federal payments for direct relief were removed from the rolls. The federal work-relief program is on the point of attaining its announced goal of providing jobs for the 3,500,000 "employables," and while this program is in effect, the care of all the rest of the unemployed becomes the concern of states, counties and municipalities. The work-relief program originally was scheduled to last until July 1, 1936, but the President later gave indication that work-relief projects would be continued beyond this point if conditions made it necessary. The Secretary of the Treasury announced on Monday a new financing operation of $900,000,000, which sent the national debt over the $30,000,000,000 mark.

LIGHTS were kept burning up to midnight of December 1 in the S.E.C. offices as the deadline for registration of public-utility holding companies approached. Many companies have filed suit to enjoin the government from enforcing the law, and the government in turn has filed at least one suit to compel compliance. Indications are that the government and the utilities will soon decide upon a test case to bring about a final ruling on the constitutionality of the measure. Potential political danger to the administration was seen in the resignation of George N. Peek as head of the Export-Import Bank and Foreign Trade Adviser to the President. Peek has advocated a plan similar to the McNary-Haugen export subsidy in opposition to Secretary Wallace's processing taxes under the A.A.A., and has opposed Secretary Hull's "most favored nation" treaties in favor of direct negotiation to "buy from countries that buy from us." Peek is regarded as having great influence among farmers, and if he follows the example of his close friend, General Johnson, in attacking the policies of the administration, it is thought he may do considerable damage.

NORTH China throughout the week continued to be a perplexing tangle of plot and counterplot, forward move and checkmate, with no clear resolution yet in sight. Five provinces originally planned, with Japanese connivance, to declare for autonomy, and a date was set. Then something went wrong, and only a limited area of eighteen counties declared for a very anti-climactic autonomy. The best guess as to what blocked the larger move seems to be that spontaneous protest throughout China, particularly in Shanghai and Canton, forced the seemingly complaisant Nanking government to make a show of resistance that was sufficient to keep the defaulting civil and military leaders in line. This week Great Britain called Japan's attention to the Nine Power Pact guaranteeing Chinese territorial integrity, and made a formal request for a statement of Japanese aims in China. It is thought that the British attitude may have had some effect in postponing the autonomy coup. The most recent development is a move to grant a large degree of autonomy to the northern provinces without actual separation, thus saving the face of the Nanking government and at the same time satisfying the Japanese desire for economic and military penetration. Perhaps the Japanese will permit such a development, and perhaps also the recently reinforced Japanese garrison in the Tientsin area will step forward for more summary action. Whatever the current delays, of the ultimate result there can be no doubt. Japanese conquest of the Asiatic mainland moves relentlessly, if somewhat jerkily, forward.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt, defending himself against the charge that he had wrecked the country by piling up a national debt of $30,000,000,000, stated that in the spring of 1933 leading bankers had informed him that the debt could safely be as high as from $55,000,000,000 to $70,000,000,000. [illegible] inconsequentially been

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bankers said this than whether it is true. On the latter point a few facts are relevant. Professor Harold M. Groves, writing in The New Republic of August 21, 1935, said that Great Britain, with one-third the population of the United States and a smaller income per capita, has a total local and national indebtedness larger than ours by $2,000,000,000. That would indicate that we might have a debt at least three times as large as at present, and still balance the budget and enjoy business revival. How about the taxes necessary to pay the interest? In Britain, enterprise is not killed by taxes that are 50 percent greater than ours per capita. There the corporation tax rate is 22.5 percent. Furthermore, according to our own standards, the present debt burden is far from insupportable. On account of lower interest rates, the cost of carrying the present $30,000,000,000 debt is less than the cost of carrying the war debt of $26,597,000,000 in 1919. Meanwhile the productive equipment and population of the country have grown tremendously. The New Republic does not like deficits, big debts and high taxes any better than anyone else, but there is a lot of nonsense being talked about them by the little brothers of the rich.

LAVAL'S recent victory has by no means clarified the political situation in France, where the basic conflicts are still unsolved. Ample evidence indicates that the strength of the People's Front is steadily growing, and that it is making inroads even in the army, which many people have assumed would go over to Colonel de la Rocque in case of a Fascist coup. On Armistice Day the veterans, for the first time, split into two hostile groups, one led by Colonel de la Rocque and another, about seven times as strong, and including many reserve officers, which marched under the slogan, "Down with Fascism." Laval's victory was largely because Herriot, leader of the Radical Socialists, came to his aid. Herriot's party is anxious not to appear before the coming general election of May, 1936, as "wreckers of the franc," though at heart this party believes in devaluation and has no other financial program. Overshadowing everything else in French politics is the question of a possible attempt by the Fascists to seize power before the election. Should Colonel de la Rocque believe that the tide is running against him, the danger of such a stroke will become imminent. Without doubt, Laval has promised to act against the Fascists; but his record gives no guarantee that his action would be sufficiently prompt or decisive to carry the day.

ALL doubt as to the political opinions of Brigadier-General Charles H. Sherrill, former Ambassador to Turkey and now American member of the International Olympic Committee, was swept away by his speech before the Italian Chamber of Commerce in New York City last week. In an address that was remarkable for its unabashed espousal of [illegible] of courage in a world of pussyfooters," described his seizure of power in Italy as "daybreak" for a land "sunk beneath the sway of Red communism," and then declared, "I wish to God he'd come over here and have a chance to do that same thing." He further lauded Mussolini as "a gallant father who has sent his own two sons into the thick of the fighting for their beloved homeland." Such are the opinions of the man who can see no merit whatever in the demand that America withdraw from the Olympics as a protest against the discrimination, injustice and persecutions of the Nazi dictatorship in the land in which the games are scheduled to be held. Meanwhile the tide of opinion demanding American withdrawal daily grows more powerful. On Monday a petition signed by forty-one college presidents including the heads of such institutions as Williams College, the Universities of North Carolina and Mississippi, and Wellesley, Goucher, Bowdoin and Mount Holyoke Colleges, was presented to the Olympic Committee urging American withdrawal. Eight Senators and countless citizens are similarly on record against American participation.

THE interpretation of Mr. Roosevelt made by Mr. John T. Flynn in his article on page 129 of this issue is one frequently heard among left critics. In sum, it is that the President made promises to "the liberals" he never intended keeping and that he sold them out to big business, as he had intended to do from the beginning. While we agree that some of Mr. Roosevelt's actions seem to justify this interpretation, we do not believe that this is the whole story or even its most important aspect. Mr. Roosevelt came into office, as The New Republic repeatedly pointed out at the time, without any deep philosophic convictions of any kind. It is our judgment that he did not realize then and does not realize now the nature of the fundamental struggle in this country or the bitter and tremendous opposition engendered by any attempt to curb the predatory activities of our economic rulers. As Mauritz Hallgren points out in his book, "The Gay Reformer," the President's vagaries and inconsistencies have arisen largely from his desire to be liked by, and to please, all kinds of people, including those whose demands are diametrically opposed and cannot possibly all be granted. When Mr. Flynn says that the President, repudiated by big business, now has to turn to the liberals for support, he might have added that he must turn, and is turning, also to the Solid South, which is as far as possible from being liberal; and to the Middle Western farmers, whose progressivism consists mainly of wanting more money for themselves, obtained in the form of government checks or through tariff manipulation.

IN AN extraordinary debate last week that filled New York's Madison Square Garden with an audience of more than 20,000, Norman Thomas and

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nism?" What made the occasion one of great significance was not the subject but the simple fact that here, for the first time, the national leaders of the Socialist and Communist Parties were joining hands in a public discussion of the merits of their respective programs. Held under the auspices and for the benefit of the Socialist Call, the new weekly newspaper of the left-wing Socialists, the debate was an experiment in coöperation between the two groups (after years of bitter hostility) and, broadly speaking, it can be regarded as a tentative step toward a united front. Of course, the discussion disclosed points of difference but it also served to emphasize the many issues on which the two parties are in essential agreement—the defense of civil rights, and of democratic government, the fight against war and fascism, and so on—issues on which they might well unite their efforts and thereby multiply their effectiveness. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the debate was that it represented a revolt of the more militant, left-wing members of the Socialist Party against the "old guard" leadership in New York, who tried to prevent Thomas' participation with a threat of expulsion from the party. The tragic defeat of the Socialists and Communists in Germany—largely because of their inability to unite—and the inspiring example of the People's Front in France are two lessons that should greatly aid the development of unity in this country.

SOME long needed debunking of current practices in the sale of gasoline is contained in the November issue of The Consumer, a monthly bulletin issued by the Consumers' Division of the N.R.A. Pointing out that a widely advertised trademark or brand name is of major importance in selling gasoline to the public, the bulletin goes on to expose the hollowness of conflicting claims of excellence among brands by saying, "Though crude petroleum varies greatly from field to field, gasoline itself, when it comes from the refinery, is fairly uniform in quality." Millions of motorists, misled by all the advertising ballyhoo, take the greatest care not to mix brands of gasoline, but the large oil companies show no such caution. The report tells of the "general swapping of gasolines by the major companies behind the scenes," speaks of the "Babylonic complexity" that results from the exchange of gasolines by independents and majors and says that the real identity of any given gallon of gasoline sold under a trade name is a matter of "tantalizing uncertainty." The present craze for high-octane gasolines, obtained partly by inserting tetraethyl-lead compounds under license from the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, a subsidiary of General Motors Corporation and Standard Oil of New Jersey, is denounced as an artificially stimulated demand whose effect is to waste the money of the purchaser. "Since the ordinary automobile engine is constructed for a medium [illegible] gasoline," the report says, "it is unnecessary to make at least one solid contribution in the form of

Shall We Have a Labor Movement?

THE BREAK between the industrial unions, under the leadership of John L. Lewis of the miners, and the conservative officials of the A.F. of L. is much more than an internal squabble in the labor movement. It is a development that carries possibilities of significance to the whole of American life.

If a social philosopher were asked to say what is the greatest single weakness in the position of the advancing forces in our society, from the mildest progressive trench to the leftmost outwork, he would be compelled to answer that it is the impotence of the American labor movement. We have little except vaguely diffused opinion with which to balance the tremendous size, power and folly of organized wealth. Whether it is a question of social legislation, of unemployment relief, of opposition to racketeering and crime, of a better economic system or of peace itself, nothing can take the place of a well organized and disciplined industrial working class. For such questions are ultimately decided against the background of the balance of social power. Reason and argument have their place, but they stand little chance against interest where the only interest that is mobilized runs all one way.

Any traveler who returns from other countries where labor is well organized either for collective bargaining or for political purposes, or both, can feel at once the difference in accepted standards of social thought and action when he strikes our shores. Granted that most of the other nations in question are still operating, formally at least, on the capitalist model, nevertheless they are decades ahead of us in their approach to the problems of modern civilization. The capitalists in these countries are not better or more intelligent capitalists than ours, but they have been compelled little by little to accept restrictions upon their disruptive action. They have been partially tamed by the growth of collective institutions. They may, of course, break loose and turn the clock back by means of destroying the labor movement as they have done in Italy and Germany, but the very fact that the first condition of fascism is this destruction should indicate to us that in so far as our labor movement is weak we approximate the regimes of these outcast states rather than those of the Scandinavian countries, Britain or France. Even those who see no hope for democratic capitalism, no matter how well it is regulated, and look forward to a socialist revolution must admit that without a conscious and organized labor movement the prospect is hopeless, at least for a nation in an advanced state of industrial development.

For a while it seemed that the New Deal might

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historically justified. There was no lack of will to do it among forces influential in the administration. Section 7a of the N.I.R.A. was planned with this end in view; and the Wagner Labor Disputes Act was passed as a better substitute. The first law was partially botched in administration; the second is still inoperative and will remain so unless it jumps the hurdle of the Constitution. But the history of both reveals plainly that the most favorable setting of laws is of little use unless labor is prepared to take advantage of it by strong and correct organization. The unions now taking the lead in the revolt against the old leadership did so. The miners, the clothing workers and others made immense gains under the N.R.A. The principal trouble came in automobiles, steel and other industries where the workers were not so well organized and had to depend on blundering and inept leadership. The main obstacles to the successful organization of these basic industries were traceable to the methods and hesitations of the A.F. of L. officialdom.

Mr. Lewis and the leaders affiliated with him sought to remedy this situation within the framework of ordinary A.F. of L. practice by forcing the passage of a compromise resolution on industrial unionism in the convention. The resolution remained so many words on paper, as administered by an Executive Council which was dominated by conservative craft unionists. The unorganized remained unorganized; the expected leap in union membership did not appear. In this fall's convention the industrial unionists returned to the attack, but, although successful on some minor points, they were checked on the main issue. The debate, however, was not a mere discussion of abstract principle; the forces wanting progress appeared to be in deadly earnest in demanding action. They saw that the labor movement was passing through a crisis. It had already lost its best opportunity. If it remained without a foothold in so many basic industries, what existed would soon be in danger. In mere self-defense a policy of aggression was required. So, the official machinery having failed them, they formed a council of their own to help the organization of workers in basic industries, along industrial lines. They did this without withdrawing from the A.F. of L.

The question now is whether the ruling officialdom will permit this activity to go on without interfering in such a way as to split the Federation. A split is the last thing the insurgents want. But they are probably willing to accept it rather than to suffer the inaction and incompetence that have governed so far. Split or no split, the main necessity is to organize the unorganized, to build strong unions in steel, automobiles, rubber and the rest, so that the miners, clothing workers, textile workers and other organized trades shall not be outflanked.

If it comes to a competition for membership in the unorganized industries between vertical or industrial unions, the advantage of position. The workers in a single industry, in 90 percent of the cases, want to belong to the same union. Industrial unions have a far greater chance of survival. Such a competition would be deplorable; it would be injurious to the morale of the labor movement and would temporarily weaken it. But it would not be more deplorable than the existing situation. We hope devoutly that it will be avoided by a timely surrender of obstructionism on the part of the A.F. of L. executives. But we also hope that the danger of a split will not soften the determination of the progressive forces of labor.

Uncle Sam Sticks Out His Neck

THE CURRENT situation regarding the export of oil to Italy has illustrated in a dramatic fashion the dangers inherent in the present policy of the United States government. Although our officials keep on denying it, it keeps on being true that their intention is to coöperate with the League of Nations in the application of sanctions to Italy. As a sop to the isolationists at home, what the State Department does is to find out—or try to find out—what the League is about to do and then anticipate its actions by a few days in order to maintain the fiction of independent operations.

One trouble with this policy is that the League itself is not following a firm and consistent course. The French are trying to keep the application of sanctions down to a minimum in order to preserve as much as possible of their understanding with Italy; the British are wavering between the desire to crush Mussolini while they have the chance and the wish to settle the African war by a compromise behind the scenes which would probably give Italy a little more than Haile Selassie offered to Il Duce shortly before the fighting began. These two facts explain why it is that the League has thus far imposed no sanctions on Italy that will seriously handicap her in a short campaign terminating, let us say, about the New Year. They also explain the arguments heard from Geneva against the imposing of more drastic embargoes, that Italy would not like them!—an argument overlooking the fact that sanctions either mean pressure which Mussolini will not like, or nothing at all.

The result of all this, in the present case, is that the United States is tacitly coöperating with a League which, at the moment, is failing to coöperate with itself. Evidently in the expectation that the League would order a boycott on sales of oil to Italy, this government last week began exerting its so-called moral pressure on American firms. The first announcements on the matter suggested an attempt to suspend such trade in toto; but later

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few years. Just how such normal trade is to be divided up among the various firms in the export field and what is to be done to business men who choose to ignore Mr. Hull's moral pressure are both subjects to which our officials apparently haven't yet had time to give any thought. But a more serious obstacle arose within a day or two after the American officials had begun to bring pressure to bear. The League postponed the issue of oil sanctions until December 12, with no guarantee that action paralleling that of the United States will be taken even then. The English, who are desperately seeking our coöperation, especially in regard to Japan, hastened to assure the Americans that they are on our side; but the English are subject to a French veto in this matter.

Meanwhile, the American oil firms make several complaints that sound reasonable. They say that British firms are continuing to sell oil to the Italians, firms in some of which His Majesty's government is itself a partner. The American companies claim that they are being forced to act without any legal warrant on what the Italians consider to be their own responsibility. They have what is probably a well grounded fear of Italian reprisals against them after the war is over. And taking the trade away from America does nothing to shorten the war so long as Italy continues to get oil supplies elsewhere, almost entirely from League sources.

These complaints are justifiable, however, only on the assumption that what the United States is trying to do is to coöperate with the League against the aggressor in the hope of shortening the war. The spirit of the neutrality legislation passed by Congress was quite different from that. Its purpose was to avoid being entangled in any war, just or unjust, by severing commercial relations with all belligerents alike. The fact that some other nation or group of nations may be selling to Italy what we refuse to sell has no bearing on this purpose. Nor, if our aim is to keep out of war rather than to aid the right belligerent, is it relevant that our embargoes might injure one party more than the other. It is, in that case, a coincidence—fortunate or otherwise—that an embargo on oil at present would hurt Italy rather than Ethiopia. If the embargo were imposed as a consequence of a law adopted with reference to all wars, rather than as the result of administrative action taken in a particular crisis, we should assume no responsibility for League action. We might, some time in the future, be applying embargoes against the participants in a League war as well as against their enemies.

This situation throws a searchlight forward upon the debate that will take place when Congress reassembles, over the rewriting of the neutrality law. It is well known that the President and the State Department objected strongly to the terms of the present resolution, because they wanted the Executive to have the right to discriminate between, or others. No sensible argument has ever been advanced to support this policy except the argument that leads to the League of Nations. It is suggested that conditions change rapidly, and that enforcing strict neutrality between two belligerents may in fact turn out to be unneutrality; but only to a State Department mind does this seem to justify abandoning neutrality from the very beginning. It is also argued that if Japan were to seize Mexico, we would not want to be neutral as between the two "belligerents"; as though Congress would not insist on taking fresh action in such an unlikely contingency, in any event!

The wise course for Congress would seem, in the light of recent experience, to be reasonably plain. To keep out of the present African war and to try to keep out of the coming general European one, Congress, as promptly as possible after it has reconvened, should rewrite the neutrality law to suspend all trade with any and every belligerent, including financial as well as commercial transactions, as soon as hostilities have begun. To keep out of war in the Far East, we should stop pretending that we can bully Japan by increasing our navy, when obviously our actions have just the opposite effect. When our choice seems to be to suspend trade and abandon investment, or go to war, we should suspend trade and abandon investment, on the realistic ground that war would ruin our trade in any case, and would cost more per week than our Oriental business is worth per year.

None of these actions, to be sure, carries any automatic guarantee that we shall be able to stay out of trouble, either in Europe or Asia; but at least, they give us a chance, if we are willing to pay the cost. Otherwise we have none. Above all, Uncle Sam should stop sticking out his neck in the present European entanglement, through a foreign policy light-heartedly improvised from day to day on a basis of advice from people who in essence do not know what it's all about or, still worse, want to see the United States become a member of one alliance which is all too plainly drifting into war with another.

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Fifty-eight Lawyers Report

AS A STUDENT of constitutional law I welcome the efforts of lawyers to enlighten me. I have recently received three free and unsolicited favors. Mr. Thomas N. McCarter, president of the Edison Electric Institute, has sent me an opinion of Mr. James M. Beck and Mr. Newton D. Baker to the effect that parts of the program of the Tennessee Valley Authority are unconstitutional. Mr. Wendell L. Willkie, president of the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, has sent me an opinion of Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam and Roberts that some of the proposals that ultimately fructified in the Utility Holding Company Act went beyond congressional power over commerce. Mr. Raoul E. Desvernine, chairman, National Lawyers' Committee of the American Security League, has sent me an opinion on the unconstitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act in which fifty-eight lawyers were assumed to have concurred. I say "assumed," because Mr. Desvernine does not say more than that the opinion was submitted to the fifty-eight for approval or criticism, and that "following this submission and as a result thereof, the report is now issued in its present form." This does not specify complete concurrence, but, so far as I know, none of the fifty-eight has entered a public disclaimer.

From time to time, also, I receive briefs in support of the government's position in pending cases and briefs by opposing counsel. These briefs are not supposed to express the candid, independent and impartial views of their authors. They are designed to persuade a court. They make no other pretension. In this they differ from the other documents referred to. Yet I find that the writings that profess to be "opinions" or "reports" are just as much briefs as those that call themselves such. I see no difference in temper between the "opinions" rendered in response to the request of a client and the "report" prepared out of an uncompensated desire to serve the public weal. The briefs prepared for submission to a court are better briefs. They do not have so many evident holes and patent strains and stretches. A brief addressed to a court does well to avoid such frailties. The canons may differ for a brief prepared for the consumption of the legislature or the electorate. I would not say that the lawyers who prepared the "opinions" and the "report" are poorer lawyers than those who prepared the briefs called briefs. Their apparent inferiority may be explained by the fact that they were lawyers acting not as lawyers, but as publicists or public-relations counsel.

Some have questioned the propriety of the action of the National Lawyers' Committee of the American Liberty League in publishing the report. Others have questioned the propriety of the connections with clients whose interests are affected adversely by recent legislation. How can one tell? It may be doubted whether even those thus condemned as indirect client-servers could tell themselves what animated them or what determined the particular positions they took. Certainly fifty-eight briefless barristers who never had a client might readily be found to expound the same views. They are views widely held by lawyers. It might have been the part of delicacy for the lawyers to disclose their affiliations rather than to leave exposure to others. It might have been the part of wisdom. But could they or anyone else tell just how much their affiliations influenced them?

I do not know those affiliations, but it must be that not a few of the fifty-eight are members of firms that do client caretaking for concerns that are large employers of labor and that do not relish the National Labor Relations Act. It must be that the views expressed by the National Lawyers' Committee are pleasing to those concerns. It must be that these views will not scare clients away. They may even attract clients. Lawyers cannot advertise, but if they become widely known, it may help a lot. Is it conceivable that lawyers for large employers could be in the mood to weigh carefully any conflicting constitutional considerations? Is it conceivable that in fairness to their clients they could join in a report that went against the known desires of those clients? Is there not some predetermination as to conclusions when lawyers so situated are picked to consider and report on a constitutional issue that divides employers and employees into two opposing camps?

Such questions have been asked and they have provoked sensitiveness on the part of some of the National Lawyers' Committee. The American Liberty League has distributed a copy of a speech by Mr. James M. Beck in which he complains of what he calls "the Attempt by New Deal Spokesmen to Curtail Freedom of Speech as Exercised by the National Lawyers' Committee of the American Liberty League." With reference to the report on the Labor Relations Act, Mr. Beck says:

> When this report was published, it was greeted with a storm of criticism by responsible members of the administration. Indeed an attempt was made to destroy its effect by anticipation, by suggesting that many of the lawyers who composed the Committee were attorneys for industrial corporations. This is probably the fact, but the innuendo that because a lawyer represents a corporation he could not express an honest opinion upon the validity of a statute is a gross insult to the entire legal profession.

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by the National Lawyers' Committee are "honest" in the sense that the members sincerely hold those views. I do have doubts whether those opinions are what from an intellectual and emotional standpoint I would call "independent and independently arrived at." I welcome the freedom of speech that the National Lawyers' Committee has exercised. I doubt whether behind it there was such freedom of thought as to entitle the conclusion to any weight because of the names subscribed to it.

To point the issue more directly, suppose for example that the National Lawyers' Committee were to draft a report on the Holding Company Act in tone and temper like that on the Labor Relations Act. One can hardly doubt what the conclusion of the Committee would be. Would Mr. George Roberts, who is a member of the National Lawyers' Committee, be free to point out that the proposed report was just a brief and failed to give due weight to the considerations on the government's side of the issue, after Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam and Roberts had given a professional opinion to the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation that the proposals for such legislation were unconstitutional?

Or take the case of Mr. John W. Davis, who is also a member of the National Lawyers' Committee and has, so far as I know, indicated no disclaimer of the report already published. One could hardly think him fully free to give full weight to considerations in favor of the constitutionality of the Holding Company Act and to express them forcibly as a citizen when as a lawyer on behalf of a newly discovered client he is being paid by another client to do his best to convince the courts that the balance is all the other way. This would not be fair to his clients, to whom he owes a professional duty. So it might not be fair to the public for him to speak as a citizen on a professed platform of impartiality when he is not free to be impartial. No one with a mind in pawn to a client on a specific issue could expect his published views to be taken for anything but a brief, however sincerely believed. On the holding-company issue Mr. Davis has a mind in pawn to a client. His duty to that client is not to be fair but to be effective, to present strongly the strength of his side of the case and to minimize the strength of the other side. Even were he able to turn the levers of his mind abruptly to an enterprise of objectivity, he is not free as a citizen to demonstrate to the public the excesses of his contentions as a lawyer.

So Mr. Davis might anticipate that any discerning person would discount any professions of intellectual independence made on his behalf by the American Liberty League. One knows from his high and supremely competent service as Solicitor General of the United States that he could write a forceful brief against many of the contentions in problems of constitutionality involved. It is hard

contentions that might be made in an adverse report on the Holding Company Act. One with less than his high competence could write such forceful briefs. One with less than his high competence could write a measured analysis of the issues, could place the particular statute in its relation to those issues, and mark out the field within which the Supreme Court may make its choice. The Court is free to choose for or against the constitutionality of the Labor Relations Act and for or against the Holding Company Act. Categories on one side can be capped by categories on the other. The Schechter case can be expanded or it can be confined to its facts. Not yet are these statutes either constitutional or unconstitutional. Those who say that they are one or the other are inevitably being influenced by their hopes and desires.

To insist that the report of the Lawyers' Committee was an advocate's brief is not of necessity to say that it should not have been issued. Many law-review articles have much of the quality of a brief. Inevitably an author somewhere is guided by preferences. The sources of such preferences may vary greatly. There may be a general preference in favor of national power, a general preference against certain methods of financing, a general preference for customers as against stockholders and bondholders, a general preference for experimentation, a general preference against government by nine judges as contrasted with government by legislatures and executives. A law-review article that seeks to lend support to the constitutionality of contemporary legislative novelties would be in a measure a brief dictated or influenced by some general social or economic views. If one lawyer may do this in an article, why may not fifty-eight do it in a report? This invites further consideration. As a preliminary point, it may be observed that the report in question was so predominantly a brief both in substance and form that no good law review would be likely to think it acceptable as an article. No good law review would think of seeking the concurrence of fifty-eight authors.

Whatever might be true of fifty-eight lawyers, if selected wholly at random, it is not to be credited that fifty-eight teachers of constitutional law selected at random would unanimously concur in the report of the Lawyers' Committee or unanimously concur in a report of contrary tenor. We may well doubt whether these fifty-eight lawyers were selected at intellectual random, even though there was professed care to get geographical and political distribution. It is hard to believe that the effort was to get representation of widely differing views and interests. It is hard to believe that the fifty-eight were not from the beginning more likely to agree than a certain nine will be. It is hard to believe that fifty-eight were gathered in order to get fuller and more careful canvass of the intricate

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an impression that could not be made by separate law-review articles written by the few who actually drafted the report for the fifty-eight.

Upon whom was this impression sought to be made? And why? Perhaps the progenitors of the plan could not tell us even if they would. Perhaps they were inspired by a kind of boyish enthusiasm that did not stop to give mature thought to what they were about. Certainly there are childish aspects to their performance. Their offer to give free legal advice to those affected by contemporary legislation hardly comports with some of the canons of their profession. For this it seems too drastic to recommend disbarment or even the lighter penalty of expulsion from the American Bar Association. It is enough to recommend laughter. But their conduct as a whole has a more serious side. This serious side is discussed in an editorial in The United States Law Review for October, in which the following point is made:

> The constitutionality of legislation is the function and responsibility of the courts, and pronouncements such as those accredited to the fifty-eight lawyers are of dubious desirability, to say the least. Whether the purpose of such emanations is to influence the federal courts when such legislation shall be presented for consideration, or whether it is to arouse public sentiment so that confidence in the courts will be impaired should the legislation be held constitutional, is not clear. But neither purpose has anything to commend it.

Whether the design of the Liberty League was to get an opinion that would encourage every employer to resist the application of the Labor Relations Act, no one can very well say. Such, however, is in considerable measure likely to be the result of the opinion backed by fifty-eight names. The conjoint affirmation will promote the popping up of lawsuits before various district courts throughout the country. Every lawyer for an employer has a good part of his brief written for him in advance. Some employers may get more direct aid from some of the fifty-eight if any are so humble as to come within the promise of Mr. Beck that "if and when any American citizen, however humble, is without means to defend his constitutional rights in a court of justice, one or more of these lawyers will, without compensation from any source, defend the rights of the individual, and in this way carry out, in the most effective way, their oath to support, maintain and defend the Constitution." This sounds fair and noble, and one thinks of James Otis. Yet, is anyone really fooled? The enterprise is too naïve to bother to characterize otherwise.

Mr. Beck resents the argument *ad hominem*. He asks: "Would it not have been wiser and more dignified for the 'New Deal' spokesmen to show in what respect the Committee's conclusion was unsound?" He adds rightly that "abuse is never argument." He again says: "Would it not have been better for Secretary Ickes, himself a lawyer, to explain in what respect the Committee's conclusion was unsound?" Why? Why should Secretary Ickes, who is not a lawyer, undertake to do what will be done in due time and in due form and place by government counsel, who happily at the moment are men of competence. The fact that opponents of legislation choose to assert its unconstitutionality in a broadside is not a reason why government officials or others should emulate them. The argument *ad hominem* is not a good argument on the substantive issue. It was not directed to that issue. It was directed against the notion that any weight should be attached to the Lawyers' Committee report because of the legal ability of the names behind it. The plan of the Liberty League necessarily seeks to attach weight to the report because of the names behind it. Against such an effort the argument *ad hominem* is appropriate. It happily is not "a gross insult to the entire legal profession." If it is an insult to fifty-eight of that profession, it may not be wholly undeserved. It is they and not their critics who may have done something to cast discredit upon the profession to which they belong.

THOMAS REED POWELL.

British Foreign Policy

"THE SMALLER the Government's majority, the stronger its League policy will be," said a prominent Labor politician on the eve of the British polls. Meaning, of course, that the more left-wing pressure there was in the new Parliament the less opportunity there would be for the Tories to welsh. At this rate, Labor having fared so poorly, the League should fare poorly too. What is actually probable? Baldwin, for the moment, says he believes in trying the League. In Hoare and Eden he has two good League men to help him. The right-wing Tories, a more formidable gang in the new House than in the old, are not League men at all, but out-and-out rearmers. They can be dragged along in support of a League policy only with reluctance and always with the possibility of revolt. But Baldwin and Hoare between them have one great advantage. They can play—if they choose—the same game in the new House over the Covenant as they played together in the old over India. They can put through a Liberal or right-center policy in defiance of their own right wing, depending upon the unavoidable support of the opposition. If the Prime Minister intends loyalty to the League, he is sitting fairly pretty.

Does he? That is a question which only time can answer; and time may not return a plain positive or negative. Nobody, of course, outside Britain believes in British idealism in this matter. Every foreign country, without exception, attributes Britain's support of the Covenant in this crisis to a clever piece of imperialism. But assuming that both readings are right and that idealism and self-interest coincide, what will be the Government's future policy? Baldwin's election pledges, for the

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of making magnificent speeches and forgetting all about them. In a way he is the wickedest of politicians, because he knows what is right and doesn't do it. When he asks the nation to "trust" him he is asking a great deal. If Eden, and especially Hoare, can be relied upon to stand firm, the Government's policy may remain firm also. If not, it will probably deteriorate, finally going to the bad. A plain rearmament policy would be far simpler to pursue and would probably get a fair amount of support in the country.

Even given Government good intentions, there will be plenty of room for disagreement. What constitutes "good League policy"? During the election it was freely predicted that the moment the Government was comfortably back at Westminster it would proceed to let down the League. The election was pictured as a trick to dish the 12,000,000 Peace Balloteers. Everything that one learns confirms the unlikelihood of anything quite so simple happening. On the most materialist grounds there is everything against it. Ministers having startled themselves with the discovery that British prestige shot up to the top in Europe as a result of their leadership at Geneva, are not likely to face the certainty of tumbling it straight down again to zero, besides forfeiting all chance of international respect for half a generation, by performing a straight Judas act. Nor are governments, of whatever complexion, composed of men who are all knave (or even all fool). The present administration is not nearly so far-sighted as this Machiavellian reading of its intentions gives it credit for. It is a group of very worried and not very clever gentlemen who are sure of only one thing—their desire to avoid "international complications." In such circumstances their policy is almost certain to be a compromise. What sort of compromise may be expected from them in the Italo-Ethiopian war?

Its ultimate nature of course depends on the day-to-day turn of events, but indications are that it is likely to be a compromise severely distasteful to left opinion. Anything that gave the Italians more than they were offered by the Committee of Five before hostilities began would surely be a settlement that condoned aggression or at least showed that it pays. There is an overwhelming moral case against such terms. Nevertheless, the probability is that when the settlement comes Il Duce will be found to have gained a good deal. Government spokesmen justify this assumption on the ground that you can only get what the League is strong enough to enforce; that the collapse of Mussolini would be a danger to Europe (this is a bull point with them); that France will not look at military sanctions anyway; that Ethiopia may crack at any moment; and that in the circumstances the wise course is to settle the trouble as early as possible, on the best terms available, and then get on with the business of strengthening the League. A compro- [illegible] offered would depend very much on the tone in which it were made. If Hoare were frankly to admit that it was disappointing and was to be followed by a vigorous effort to strengthen the League for the future, left distrust might be somewhat mitigated.

The biggest test of sincerity will come when the present dispute is over. Then we shall discover whether the Government really means what it says when it talks, as it has recently done, of making the League an instrument of revisionism. Geneva's weakness all along has been that it is used to maintain the *status quo*. Unless that can be changed there seems no real hope for Europe. Recent hints of "reform" of the League have raised angry suspicions in some of the smaller chancelleries, but a living League, instead of the present half-League, will certainly have to face up to changes, if not in itself, in the European *status quo* —and not only the European. Hoare has spoken vaguely of the have-nots' legitimate claims to colonial expansion. What kind and extent of concessions will Britain be prepared to offer to ease the pressure on the *status quo*, and especially on herself?

In Europe itself British policy will continue to look for salvation through regional pacts as the most practical means of giving teeth to collective security within the framework of a world organization which has just shown that its main influence as yet is moral. Pretty certainly British policy in this direction is not thought out and will be opportunist. It would probably go for an Eastern pact if one seemed practicable, but the theory of the indivisibility of peace will not stand in the way of whatever offers itself nearer home. People are asking what the British attitude towards Germany is going to be. The answer is, nobody knows, certainly not the British. The naval agreement showed that the Cabinet's inclination is to take one thing at a time and not allow principles or ultimate objectives to interfere with what looks like a sound practical deal. Probably more will be heard of an Air Locarno. The German government is plainly very anxious for British friendship—it is highly nervous of what the inclusion of Winston Churchill in the Cabinet might do to these prospects—but both the anti-fascist left, and now the extreme Tory right who have never forgotten the Hohenzollerns, are profoundly distrustful of Berlin's intentions, and would not much prefer an avowed Reichswehr regime, which looks to be the only possible alternative to Hitler.

There are, however, elements that would make friends with Hitlerism rather than see Soviet power increased. Despite outward friendliness, British officialism remains at bottom deeply suspicious of the Kremlin. The view is held that at Geneva, where Litvinov is thought to have overplayed his hand, Russia has been actuated by motives not pro-League but merely anti-German. The Bolshevik bogey continues to obstruct the way to

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cow. It also stands in the way of a stern settlement with Italy. Schacht has been busy warning the Bank of England of the horrible consequences to Europe of bringing Mussolini down. League or no League, revisionism or no revisionism, capitalist interests must come first.

But British policy may yet find its most acute embarrassment in the Far East. The mere reminder that this sector of the globe exists sends shudders down the backs of the Foreign Office. All that they will tell you if you question them is that here is part of the world where the League's writ clearly does not run. This leaves the field open for anything. No doubt here, as in most other places, no long-term policy has been formulated: it will be hand-to-mouth. Despite the prevalent view among foreigners that British diplomacy is an affair of far-sighted and deep-laid plots, all modern experience leads one to the conviction that the exact opposite is true. It is almost always a matter of what seems best at the moment. This explains why it vacillates so, and is so difficult to understand. GERALD BARRY.

Page Opposite Editorial

Hearst Woos the Intellectuals and Gets Jilted

IT HAS always been said that Hearst's newspapers are published for morons. That may describe the papers well enough, but it is not fair to Mr. Hearst. It is not *his* fault that his readers are only the unenlightened and the semi-literate. *He* aspires to better things. Nothing could make him happier than to have an intellectual audience for his papers—in four cities. Indeed, for almost five years he has been engaged in a passionate flirtation with the intelligentsia of those cities. That his advances have been repulsed, his bonbons and his favors ignored, is doubtless one of the great emotional tragedies of our time. And now, alas, his ardor is cooling and soon, it seems, he will give up the chase entirely.

We can but wonder, however, why it lasted as long as it did, for like all publicized amour it has been a bawdy and ridiculous spectacle from the beginning. The story of this affair goes back to February, 1931, when The New York World died its bloody death, an event that stirred mightily the imaginations of the owners of other and better-financed newspapers. This feat was accomplished by the sudden happy realization that The World's "page opposite editorial" had been buried with the rest of the paper. You remember that page, surely—where for years, morning after morning, we were entertained and illuminated by such of the town's wits and reporters as Heywood Broun, Deems Taylor, Harry Hansen, Alexander Woollcott, William Bolitho, Robert Littell, F.P.A. and St. John Ervine (remember *him?*). People who know about such things say that we used to follow the writings of these men with such fidelity and act upon their advice with such unquestioning faith that the page became something like a Bible to us. It was this, I gather, that made it popular with advertisers of intellectual merchandise—book publishers in particular. There was so much publishers' advertising on the page that it became one of The World's few profitable features. The page was launched under the editorship of the intellectuals in a profitable embrace—the theory being, of course, that we who read The World's "page opposite editorial" were intellectuals.

Well, it now occurred to the owners of The Herald Tribune, to Mr. Hearst and to Roy Howard (who bought the right to put the word "World" before the word "Telegram") that at last the great opportunity had arrived. And there ensued a scramble for the patronage of the "intellectuals" such as had never before been seen or heard. The Herald Tribune got F.P.A.'s column and brought Lewis Gannett over from The Nation to write on books, and thus a new "literary" page was born. It was not a bad idea, and the Reids have probably made some money out of it. Mr. Howard added Hansen to Broun, whom he already possessed, and the result was a lot of circulation, which, unfortunately, translated itself into department-store rather than book advertising. What Mr. Hearst got was the wholly brilliant idea that he could put together on a single page enough "big" names and enough features to reincarnate at least the spirit of the deceased "page opposite editorial" and thereby take over entirely the intellectual circulation of The World. In fact, he would get not only the circulation but the advertising. He would make the bid irresistible eventually by syndicating his page, so that every morning the readers of The Chicago Herald-Examiner, the Los Angeles and San Francisco Examiners, as well as of The New York American, could read the embellished reflections of our best minds. I don't know why he chose just those four papers, except that they are his favorites among the many he owns. Maybe he thought that there are no intellectuals in Boston, Atlanta, Seattle, etc. At any rate, thus was born Hearst's "page opposite editorial," which was later merged with another feature and now carries the flamboyant title "March of Events Page."

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from the start at The World's intelligentsia, please read what Mr. Hearst said of it: "It will present to New Yorkers interested in the significant trends of Art, Literature and Drama—and Life, a group of distinguished contributors, any one of whom alone will make the page noteworthy— Sparkling in content, mature in treatment, it will reflect the modern sophisticated spirit that is New York itself— Such a page will make The Morning American even more than ever 'the Newspaper of the modern New Yorker.'" An interesting announcement, that—from the point of view of English usage.

Among the "distinguished contributors" were Deems Taylor (music), Gilbert Gabriel (theatre), Malcolm Vaughan (art), Idwal Jones (anything), Charles Hanson Towne (books and life), and Agnes Smith (anything). Mr. Towne was previously editor of Harper's Bazaar, a fashion and fiction magazine. Mr. Jones was a working newspaperman. I know nothing about Mr. Vaughan and Miss or Mrs. Smith. But I do know that the most important things on that page, at least in Mr. Hearst's eyes, were Mr. Towne's daily literary column and the book notes prepared by Mr. Rascoe during the few weeks he was there. Those were the things that were supposed to pull in the ads.

At the beginning of 1934 William Soskin, who had attracted considerable attention on The New York Post and had built up a substantial following as well as a reputation, was brought over to do the book reviewing in place of Mr. Towne, and the job is still his. The present editor of the page is, I believe, a Mr. Bald. Among the present contributors are Robert Benchley, Frank Sullivan, G. K. Chesterton, Havelock Ellis, Bruce Barton, Bruno Lessing, Mr. Towne and anyone else who has a short, salable piece around, from Ogden Nash to Edgar Lee Masters.

It is worth repeating that the page revolves around the book reviewer. Circulation and prestige are, no doubt, something, but advertising is a lot more. Mr. Towne's column didn't pull the ads, so Mr. Hearst tried Soskin. Mr. Soskin hasn't pulled them either. At the beginning of 1936 Mr. Soskin will be exercising his potentially vigorous talents elsewhere. There won't be any daily reviewer. There may not even be a "March of Events Page."

The difficulty has been, of course, that the "intellectuals" simply refused to cohabit with Mr. Hearst no matter how large a dowry he promised them. It has not been the fault of the book reviewer (who was supposed to play the part of the marriage broker). Mr. Towne never had an audience, but Mr. Soskin did have one, and when he moved in, the audience stayed out. No one can actually prove it, but it's true none the less. Book publishers have excellent hunches about such things, and book publishers never did, are not doing, and never will do that people who read books—people, that is, who have any interest at all in ideas, or who have any sensitiveness about the dignity of human life—would no more read a Hearst paper than they would voluntarily live on a garbage dump. Yet Mr. Hearst apparently never knew that! Now for the first time he is beginning to suspect that he never had a chance. He learns hard, that man. He has paid some fancy prices for the stuff he has printed on that desolate page.

And what stuff it has been! The failure of the literary column to deliver the goods to California's most indignant taxpayer is not especially significant. More interesting are the other features on the page—the bait that surrounds Mr. Soskin's gambols. Consider the lack of discrimination, the downright bad taste, expressed in the juxtaposition of Edgar Lee Masters and Frank Sullivan, Bruce Barton and Havelock Ellis. Is there not, in this senseless jumble of celebrities, an implicit confession that no particular audience is aimed at—that, in fact, the editors of the newspaper have no idea whether there really is an audience for the page? There can be no doubt of it. One of the writers featured on the page has told his friends quite frankly that he has never had, nor have the editors ever attempted to give him, a feeling that he has actually been in communication with someone—except Mr. Hearst. What can you expect of a newspaper department that has a known audience of one—and that one Mr. Hearst?

But even as individuals the present contributors are a depressing lot. I suppose it tells us something about the quality of Mr. Hearst's mind, or his shrewdness, that he lets Bruce Barton appear regularly on a page published for the intelligentsia. And is the Chesterton of 1935 any better? The truth is that to everyone but the neo-Catholic die-hards, he is just an old bore—and so (I say it sadly, thinking of what he used to write) is Havelock Ellis. Mr. Towne, on the other hand, is definitely bright. He wanders around the city and reports on the best recipes and menus for odd dishes and meals and the odd thoughts and doings of the best people and places. As for Mr. Bruno Lessing, he wanders around Europe doing approximately the same thing, but much more obnoxiously. His advice on cookery could not be more ecstatic if he were writing about music and sunsets. Here is one of his tenderest memories of Sweden: "That lunch! *O mon dieu! Ach du lieber!* Je-ru-sa-LEM! There were two courses. *Hors d'oeuvres* and a duck . . . each one was a gastronomic dream." To be sure, he writes of other things. He tells us that "Andersen's fairy tales have been the delight of children of many lands" and that "Johnson wrote many stories, essays, articles and poems which today are rarely read. And yet there is much pith in them." Pith!

Benchley and Sullivan, who are supposed to provide the comic relief, are in a different class, and their performances are most enlightening. Neither

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Hearst newspaper. Maybe once a month will the stuff they write for the "March of Events Page" get a smile out of you. Why? One reason is obviously that they don't care about it. It's just a way to make a little extra cash. Their friends won't read what they write *there!* But another reason, and I think the more fundamental one, is that there is practically nothing they can be funny about and still get paid. The funniest things in the world are the things Mr. Hearst admires. The things that best lend themselves to genuine satire are the things he believes and stands for. So they confine themselves to "safe" subjects—subjects that are of no consequence. Hence their Hearst pieces are trivial to the point of inanity. And the way they write these pieces—indifferently, casually, sloppily—shows that they know perfectly what they are doing. In this respect, let it be understood, they are no different from the other contributors. No one of them dares to tackle an important or vital subject. Food is the big topic of the page—not how to get it, not why millions of people haven't got it, but how to enjoy it! How to cook it! That and cathedrals and cafés and the absurdities of intellectuals, plus a little pointless whimsy and a little harmless spoofing at nothing at all, form the main substance of a page ostensibly published for literate and sophisticated people.

Truly the bait as a whole is the dreariest, most puerile collection of reading matter ever put forth by a newspaper. It doesn't matter, however. Nobody reads it, nobody cares. Mr. Hearst's last attempt to woo a non-moronic audience consisted in the serialization of Huey Long's "I Am President" and Tchernavina's "Escape from the Soviets"—Huey and Tchernavina on a page created for intellectuals. The intellectuals didn't succumb. And so now at last it looks as though Mr. Hearst isn't *totally* dumb: the page is on its way out. A little sad music, please.

BERNARD SMITH.

The American Dnieperstroy

WHEN I crossed southern Colorado from east to west a few days ago, my train, dropping several thousand feet from the top of the transcontinental divide in the course of a few miles, wound downward through a canyon beside the bed of an insignificant, an inconsequential river, trickling along in an amiable and unimportant way. Days later and hundreds of miles distant I met the same river again, now become the lordly Colorado, whose course, carved at one point through a vertical mile of colored rock, provides the Grand Canyon, the most awesome single spectacle in the whole world—the Colorado, which in flood has in the past wreaked incalculable damage but (if the engineers' plans do not miscarry) will never do so again; will on the contrary be of tremendous usefulness to that part of the human anthill which lies within a vast circle whose central point is a few hundred miles from the river's mouth in the Lower California Gulf.

What Hath Man Wrought.—You reach Boulder Dam by automobile from Las Vegas, Nevada (of which more in a moment). For two-thirds of its length the road runs straight across the semi-desert upland through sparse and stunted vegetation; then you twist upward and to the left amid barren small hills. You pass a barrier where a uniformed representative of Uncle Sam looks you over (and politely turns you back if you happen to be unemployed and looking for work), and in a twinkling here you are in Boulder City. A few years ago this was bare desert, without a tree or a teaspoonful of water; now it is a pleasant commun[illegible]

beds. The men who are making the dam live here in big air-cooled dormitories, traveling to and from the dam itself, a few miles away, in huge buses. As many as 5,000 persons have been employed simultaneously, though with the end of the job perhaps only eighteen months away the number is now reduced. The men work in three shifts—day, swing and graveyard; they eat in a huge restaurant whose staff tosses off lightly the task of preparing up to 10,000 "sit down" meals and 5,000 box lunches every day.

The work is exceedingly hard, often dangerous, and not particularly well paid; the average payroll works out at about $35 per week per person, which, in view of the many highly skilled men who get more than this, means that large numbers get less. Nevertheless, in several ways the workers here have had unusually good conditions—including the air-cooled sleeping rooms in a climate where the summer temperature often goes above 120 degrees (I have seen it myself at 127). The men's living quarters reminded me strongly of conditions in an average dormitory for men in a Western college; and when I mentioned this I was told that in fact a large proportion of the workers had been college men who, because of the vagaries of our economic system, had been unable to get jobs more appropriate to their training.

Thumbing the Nose at Mother Nature.—Up still higher into the hills, a few miles on winding mountain roads; a long and sharp descent with a hairpin turn, and here you are, a quarter of a mile

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hills, with hardly a blade of vegetation on their sharp-edged shoulders of volcanic material. Men came and clambered over the rocks, squinted far down at the green and white water against the black, deeply shadowed walls, and this is what they have done: they have built vast tunnels through the canyon walls, paralleling the course of the mighty stream; they have turned the water out of its bed; in that dry bed they have constructed by far the largest dam on earth, six hundred feet through at the base and towering almost two-thirds as high as the Empire State Building. Upstream from that dam is now accumulating a lake which will take ten years to fill. It will then be 115 miles long, 8 miles wide at its widest point, and it will contain enough water to cover all of New York State to a depth of one foot. If by some miracle of nature the river itself were to disappear from the face of the earth, its mighty current would continue to sweep onward at the normal volume for *two years* before this lake would be exhausted.

What you see as you come around that hairpin turn is a vast wall of new, gray-white concrete, curved in a beautiful bow with its arch upstream for strength. Just beyond it are four concrete towers which look "modern" because they are functional—two on either side of the dam, close inshore—the intake towers through which will pass the water for the hydro-electric plant. That plant will lie nestled against the downstream side of the dam, a U-shaped structure which in fact will be twenty stories high but will, I should say, look like a pygmy beside the flank of that incredible man-made mountain. At present, the floor of the canyon below the dam is the usual appalling litter that goes with big construction—temporary roads, wooden scaffolding, a tangle of power-cables. Even from our height, a little below the top of the dam itself, the workers moving about amid their rubbish heaps seem incredibly small and weak; the mind refuses to grasp the fact that these tiny dolls and others like them have actually turned aside the river, built that vast cliff of concrete, chiseled and blasted out all these roads, many of them cut into the very face of the cliff, bored the mighty tunnels through which the entire river is now racing silently, far below our feet in the bowels of the hill.

Abstractedly, as we see huge cages move out on cables strung across the canyon, and then descend 700 feet with their massive cargoes, we hear the Voice of Explanation in our ears: The purposes of Boulder Dam are flood control, irrigation, silt control, water supply and electricity. The new aqueduct, many miles downstream, will carry one billion gallons of water per day to Los Angeles, a distance of 239 miles, over desert and through mountains, lifting it a quarter of a mile, by means of pumping stations, in the process. Still farther downstream, a new irrigation canal will carry water to 1,000,000 acres and ultimately to 500,000 more. The dam will have a maximum electric capacity four times that c Niagara, three times that of Muscle Shoals, tw and one-half times that of the great Russian dai which was once called Dnieperstroy. The sale of ele tricity and water should pay the expense of constru tion within about fifty years (the aqueduct will co some $60,000,000 more than the dam itself, and i next only to the Panama Canal among the grea projects of the modern world).

The dam is by far the largest single piece o masonry ever attempted. It weighs 6,000,000 ton and if this were poured in a cube, it would cover square block and rise higher than the Empire Stat Building. Because of the heat engendered in pou ing, the dam would take a hundred years to cool, i left to itself. To hasten the process, more than 50 miles of tubing have been built into the structur through which ice water circulates from a plan capable of turning out 1,000 tons of ice ever twenty-four hours (compare that with your electri refrigerator). This dam, which is being built by combination of private companies, was first tailo made in the Denver offices of the Reclamatio Service, where the plans were all drawn. The actua construction, of course, was mostly done on the spo Before construction could begin, a branch railroa had to be built thirty-three miles in length; man miles of first-class highway were constructed and oddly enough, a power-line 222 miles long wa strung to bring electricity, for the building job, t the place which will ultimately produce the world' largest supply of it.

The top of the dam is broad enough for a road way, and is already used for that purpose. Even tually, the main highway between Chicago and Lo Angeles will go through here and tin-can tourist rattling along at fifty miles an hour toward th Coast will glance down casually at the lake on th right, the river resuming its flow on the left. Prob ably few of them will ponder very much about th 6,000,000 hours of heart-breaking, risky work per formed here by steel-helmeted men in overalls, who the task completed, have gone their anonymous way toward the next job. Where's that road-map Mary? Well, why'd you let the baby have it, any how? It says bear left at Las Vegas—that's funny I thought that town was in New Mexico. Anyhow, step on it; here's a swell stretch, and we ought to get to Barstow by dinnertime.

Worm's-Eye View.—My friend Buddy the chauffeur, tearing down a winding mountain road, deposes and says:

The brakes on this car are all shot. Hope you don't mind? I can most always hold her by going into second gear.

Sure, I worked on the dam. Say, everybody around here has taken a crack at it one time or another, or anyhow tried to. Men came here from pretty near everywheres, 'specially a couple years

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trip down. You seen it: the cage goes out over the canyon, 700 feet high and then in the middle it goes on down. Lots of men couldn't stand it. They'd hang onto the cage and ride back up on the first trip and quit right there.

Good many men been killed here. What do you expect? It's dangerous work. Don't know exactly how many, but it must be close to 200. Quite a lot of them fell. A fellow was running the hoist that pulls the cage up and down on the cables. One time he was bringing up a cage with three men in it, and when it got to the top he forgot to pull the lever. The hoist wheels went on turning, the cable raveled out, and the cage dropped. Sure, all killed. Did they fire the hoistman? Say, they never caught him to fire him. Anybody that gets in an accident like that, he lights out for all hell and you never see him again.

Used to be a cable bridge across the river—also 700 feet up. Floor was two planks, each twelve inches wide, no handrail or nothing. Many a man come here, took one look at that bridge and quit. Sometimes somebody would start to walk across, standing up, of course, and leaning against the wind. Then he'd look down, or get thinking about it, and lose his nerve. He'd drop to all fours, hugging them planks, and crawl off an inch at a time. When two of you met, walking from opposite sides, you'd take hold of hands, swing out and past each other, straighten up and let go of hands again. One fellow got scared in the middle of the swing, and the other man fell. After that they strung another cable for a sort of handrail. Wasn't much good, though; kept hitting you in the leg as you walked and you'd come off of there all black and blue.

A fellow was sitting in a painter's chair, hung down over the side of the dam, 'bout twenty-five feet from the top. He looked up and seen a man slip and come down, over the edge. Son of a gun if he didn't kick the face of the dam, swing out and catch the guy right in the air. Saved his life. Tore his coat though. And then the man he caught turned out to be a supervisor. Son of a gun!

It's funny about them hoistmen. Even when they are just running a cage out and down, up and in, they differ a lot. You'd get so you'd know who was at the levers, just from his style. You seen them big buckets to carry wet concrete; did you notice how the whole bottom opens out to let the stuff through? Course, when she empties, the bucket jumps up a little with the weight off. This fellow Smitty, now, he could jerk the lever so when she bounced, she come up twenty-five feet. Nobody else could do it. He could unload ten buckets to anybody else's nine, right along. The other men said it was the helpers he had, but Smitty said No, they could give him any helpers they wanted, and he'd still beat them. Did, too.

Well, I missed that truck. Guess you thought I was going to hit, didn't you? I'll have to have somebody look at these brakes and see to it.

This is the second of several articles reporting

Wide-open Town.—So far as anyone can discern from casual observation, the only occupations of Las Vegas, Nevada, are drinking, gambling and prostitution. They must do something else there, but if so it is not discernible to the innocent tourist's eye. Probably the dam, with up to 5,000 men, mostly single, has helped, though old inhabitants tell me that Las Vegas has always been one of the most wide-open towns in a wide-open state. It is a bit startling, at first, to walk down the main street at eleven A.M. and see in almost every block one or more gambling houses, doors open to every passerby, crowded with men and women, old and young, playing Keno, roulette, poker, shooting craps, or betting on horse races described by a raucous-voiced gentleman who gets his facts by direct wire from the track. Las Vegas' Painted Ladies go in for raspberry-colored sailor pants, coral-tinted blouses and high-heeled slippers; their faces, beneath the metallic-looking orange rouge which is universal in the Southwest, are haggard and burned like the faces of all desert people. Every second or third man you meet has had about three drinks too many, and is glad of it. The ladies, as always, drink less or hold it better, and obligingly help keep their gen'l'men friends from rolling into the gutters.

Perhaps I had better break down and confess that going in for sin in a Big Way, as Las Vegas does, seems to me a pretty awful spectacle. It is carrying over the habits of the old West into an era of long-distance buses, radio sets and ubiquitous Ford V-8s. The cowhand or miner who once got to town on an occasional Saturday night now can, and apparently does, come in and raise hell any odd Tuesday morning that he feels like it, and whatever glamor there once was to the business of buying excitement has departed. (A Western friend to whom I said this, replied: "You're just kidding yourself. There never was any glamor, except in Wild West novels.")

Probably I am being both unfair and sentimental, but I found myself making comparisons between Boulder City and Las Vegas, to the disadvantage of the latter. Boulder City was built and is still largely controlled by the federal government, and it has none of the things of which its rival has so many too many. Even if you assume that Las Vegas is Boulder City's necessary slum, you still can't help feeling that in this place private industry shows itself in one of its less savory forms, and that Messrs. Herbert Hoover and Ogden Mills would help their general case if they could somehow whisk it away.

(Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce: Please don't write.)

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Washington Notes

Are We Blundering into War in the Pacific?
—Navy Experts Say We Can't Win—
Diplomats Favor Temporizing

AMONG experts of the State and Navy departments, there is a marked difference in points of view regarding Japan's eruption into North China. As far as can be judged, the administration has not yet settled upon a definite policy for dealing with the new situation, and the conflict between the two groups is still in the realm of talk. As might be expected, the navalists are much more peaceful than the diplomats. At least some navy officials would like to see the United States acknowledge Japan's supremacy, and abandon its extraterritorial status in China. The diplomats are by no means ready for any such drastic step.

The navalists look at the Far East with the eyes of professional fighters. Their test of any proposed policy is whether it eventually leads to war. They say that they do not want war with Japan, for the good reason that this country could not win. This cannot be set down as departmental propaganda for more ships, for the navalists say privately that this country could not conceivably build a large enough fleet to defeat Japan in the western Pacific.

The essence of their position is that a modern battle fleet, with its necessary screen of destroyers, its supply ships and oil tankers, cannot indefinitely remain at sea. Specifically, the American battle fleet could not sail proudly westward to Japan, and there wait, like a cat before a rathole, for a chance to pounce upon and destroy Japan's fleet. That is, not with safety. Not only would its supply ships be constantly harassed by Japanese raiders, but there would always be the possibility that a lucky Japanese torpedo or airplane bomb might put one of our capital ships temporarily out of commission. A battleship is virtually unsinkable, but for repairs it would need to return thousands of miles to the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, or Puget Sound drydocks, and would be lost to the fleet during what might be the critical weeks of the war.

According to preponderant naval opinion, a fleet should be kept in the nautical equivalent of a safety-deposit vault until the moment of a decisive battle. If, in a war with Japan, it was learned that the Japanese fleet was on its way to the United States, it would be strategically sound for our fleet to steam out of Pearl Harbor and engage it. But if the Japanese prudently remained in their home waters and, with or without the consent of the Chinese government, began seizing American property in China, interning our business men there and forcing the surrender of our legation guards and Chinese river patrols, there would be nothing that the navy could do about it unless, by venturing into Far Eastern waters, it were to risk losing the whole war.

If the United States really wishes to fight Japan, say the navalists, let the army do it. They point to the Canal Zone to illustrate what they mean. In the Canal Zone, [illegible] American possessions will be within raiding distance of the Japanese coast. hostile army, attempting to storm it from its land sides, could be beaten back with horrible losses. Besieged, it could hold out for many months. Let the army create a similarly impregnable position in Guam. Let newly bestowed freedom be withdrawn from the Philippines, and an equally strong position be created at Manila. Then let the State Department obtain from China a concession like the one that the British hold at Hongkong, and a third position be created on the Chinese coast. The navalists would then be willing to discuss a war with Japan.

In the navalists' opinion, however, it is preposterous to think that the voters of this country would ever embark upon any such conscious and grandiose program of conquest. In any case, the likelihood of Japan's permitting us to carry through preparations of this magnitude is small. Under the Washington Treaty we pledged ourselves not to fortify Guam and Manila. If we should begin vast military construction at Guam and Manila, the Japanese might not fight, but if we were to obtain and start fortifying a base on the Chinese coast—and a base within a day's sail of the Japanese islands is strategically needed—the Japanese would fight at once, and would be thoroughly justified in doing so.

Naval officers are skeptical about an alliance with England. They point out that English interests in China are about six times those of the United States. When, before the World War, the German naval building compelled England to concentrate her main fleet in the North Sea, she turned of necessity to Japan to defend her interests in the Far East, and formed the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Now, as the uncertain future of Europe again forces England to bring her fleet into European waters, she will be certain to form another understanding with Japan. As long as we are militarily powerless in the Orient, it would be of no advantage to England to ally herself with us. Summing this all up, the navalists stoutly condemn former Secretary of State's Stimson's policy of resistance to Japan. Some day the Japanese might call our bluff.

The State Department experts agree with almost none of this, except the fact that we cannot now successfully fight Japan. They think that the navalists are mistaken in believing that the voters will not support preparations for a Far Eastern war. In their opinion, the present pacifism of the country is hysterical, unstable, and for that reason dangerous. If Japanese troops, invading north China, should unintentionally kill a few Americans, the temper of the country might change overnight. State Department experts regard the idea of a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance as nonsensical. Australia, New Zealand and Canada, banding together, forced the ending of the alliance in 1921, and will never permit another one to be formed.

The diplomats give the impression that they are in favor of temporizing. General MacArthur is in the Philippines raising an army that in ten years should rank, man for man, with the best that Japan can show. Our own army is preparing air bases in the Alaskan islands that

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has just concluded a binding agreement with Germany, her only real European naval rival, and is about to build a great new fleet. Russia is at present outside the State Department's calculations, because, while Hitler remains in power, its attention will be concentrated upon Europe. Nevertheless, Russia's influence in the Orient will slowly increase. In another ten years, perhaps sooner, the balance of power in the Orient may shift. Of course, this policy of temporizing means risking war, but the naval officers will have to fight war, not the diplomats.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money[1]

Recalling the Piping Days of July, 1933—
What Business Thinks of F.D.R. Now
—Liberals, Get Out from Under

IN JULY, 1933, riding into New York on the Long Island Railroad, I fell into conversation with a fellow commuter—a New York business man whose name is not unknown to fame. The N.R.A. was just moving into high and General Johnson was receiving the embattled trade associations as they poured into Washington demanding codes. I ventured to criticize Mr. Roosevelt's course and to my surprise my companion—a business man, a Republican business man who had voted for Hoover—turned on me indignantly. He ended by saying that he had voted for Hoover but that he hoped God would forgive him and that he believed Franklin D. Roosevelt was the greatest leader since Jesus Christ.

It will be difficult, I know, for many people to recall the extent to which former hard-boiled merchants and traders adopted the new Messiah in those confused days. It is even difficult to believe now that it was so. At the time I ventured two opinions. One was that Mr. Roosevelt was making the key error of his career in supposing that he could win and hold the support of business, and particularly big business. The business man's attitude toward politics is dictated by purely pragmatic considerations—frequently draped in the flag, of course. He is also a demander—incessant, ruthless. He knows what he wants and he wants it all. He has no time for the politician who does not play his game completely.

The President himself made the mistake of supposing that he could curry favor with these boys. He invited them to tea in an endless procession. He patted them on the back, palavered them, promised them, yielded to them continuously and, in almost every crucial fight, permitted the friends of big business within his official family to pull the teeth out of New Deal legislation.

The other opinion I entertained at the time was that if business men had any brains for such situations they would string along with Mr. Roosevelt. He has been the best friend they ever had. He yielded as much to them as any man who has ever sat in the White House. He got away with it because always he kept talking in the language of liberalism and the public hardly realized what was going on.

There was only one point on which he really wanted to act against them. That was against the utility holding companies. Then he merely wanted to hit a few powerful gentlemen who had opposed him. On security legislation, stock-market legislation, he would have been satisfied with the feeblest law. He seldom entertained any serious notions about banking reform. His last Federal Reserve Bank changes looked a good deal more formidable than they really are. The banks have not been disturbed in their ancient racket one whit. I had hoped that business would see its own interests and string along with Roosevelt, that Roosevelt would make the Democratic Party the party of business and that the way might be prepared for the extinction of the Republican Party and the rise of a new party built around modern economic ideas and reform. But business has been foolish enough to spit Roosevelt out of its mouth and with the most insulting gestures. Now all the noble protectors of property he courted so assiduously are crowding each other in the effort to destroy him. He must now turn for support to the liberals he played for suckers. Will they continue to play that role?

Every speech that Herbert Hoover makes tends to send angry and disappointed men back to Roosevelt's side. But liberals should not be fooled again. There is no place in the Democratic Party for them. There is particularly no place in a party led by a man who thinks wholly in terms of his own political fortunes and is almost incapable of resolving questions into their fundamentals and dealing with them as economic questions or moral questions or social questions rather than political questions.

Who have you got better than Roosevelt, I am asked when I say such things. Who, I reply, has ever brought the cause of liberalism into such disrepute? Who has ever subjected the cause of liberalism to being reviled and laughed at for failures with which liberals had nothing to do, but which Mr. Roosevelt labeled "liberal" for political purposes, as for instance, the N.R.A.? Let the liberals leave Mr. Roosevelt to his Morgenthaus, Ropers, Dickinsons, Farleys, Robinsons and Harrisons and seek a refuge in some party—any party, however feeble at first—where they can take a stand without having to spend their days apologizing for their leader.

What is more, there is no reason why modern liberalism should take the risk of associating itself with the inevitable and perhaps tragic disaster that awaits Mr. Roosevelt—not indeed in 1936, but after, when the accumulated follies of his administration settle upon his head.

Business itself is so naive as to suppose that some natural forces are pushing business up in some kind of natural recovery. That the apparent recovery is the work of the government's spending and borrowing program they ignore. How long will this lift continue? Does anyone suppose that it will last through Mr. Roosevelt's second term if he is reëlected? And what will be the effect if the inevitable collapse overtakes him and liberalism is called upon to take the responsibility for his blunders?

The liberals in Washington should send a polite note to their right-wing colleagues tendering to them without reservation all their rights, titles and interests in Franklin D. Roosevelt. Perhaps the time is [illegible]

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The Marxian Epileptic

IN TERMS of rhyme, reason, good taste and formal plot structure, "A Night at the Opera" is a sieve, a leaky ship, and caulked to the guards with hokum. It has three of the Marx Brothers and absolutely no pride. It seems thrown together, made up just as they went along out of everybody else's own head—it steals sequences from René Clair, it drives off with whole wagonloads of the Keystone lot without so much as putting the fence back up; it has more familiar faces in the way of gags and situations than a college reunion—it has even got a harp-and-piano specialty, which it goes through with dead solemnity for about fifteen minutes. In short, "A Night at the Opera" is a night with the Marx Brothers, who have a zest for clowning and a need to be cockeyed that are either genius or just about enough to fit them all out with numbers and a straitjacket, and who troop through this impossible hour and a half of picture with such speed and clatter as to pin up a record for one of the most hilarious collections of bad jokes I've laughed myself nearly sick over.

The film could have been grand satire on Lawrence Tibbett in "Metropolitan" or Grace Moore in the love-me-love-my-tonsil cycle; but satire, like the cherrystone clam in the colonel's slipper, was too much. It has a pretty idea and starts off with fine edge—the Italians are a singing race, so open on Italy singing. And then the Marx Brothers, in the onward march of their stealing everything in sight (you couldn't have kept a camera or a chorus girl on that set ten minutes running), steal the idea and the edge. The romance is handled straight, the love and singing scenes being cut out like slabs of mince pie. And the picture has no line or continuous pitch of its own at all.

Yet many of the individual scenes show much sure generalship in the way of galloping through it, one, two, three and putting over the big punch before you can get your breath, and keeping the boys in focus, all the boys all the way (try this some time—that terrific walk of Groucho's would get out of focus like a clay pigeon). In the good spots the action is kept swift and disentangled, evenly spaced and in clear relief. Groucho has just squeezed into a third-class stateroom with a trunk big enough to hold two brothers and a tenor, who pop out of it as soon as the door is wedged shut, and then people begin to pile in—manicurists, cleaning maids, retired majors, stewards with trays, the engineer's assistant, the engineer looking for him. They begin to get about seven deep and the laws of physics are insulted right and left, Groucho still the host, sarcastic and regal with a cigar, the other two still swarming up the chambermaids, everything still piling up and bulging the walls until just the second when the rich matron, never so outraged but blackmailed into it, sweeps along to her assignation with Groucho and arrives square in front of the door, which breaks out like a shot and they all spill out clear across the ship, like a tubful of blueberries.

Or take the opening night at the Metropolitan. The issues at stake here are too many to recount, but the impresario is lashed in his closet upstairs, Groucho is wearing his tails and addressing the throng from the rich Everything is in place, the horseshoe, the music lovers, the maestro wees baton (ha!); the orchestra is just rising into one of those ripe overture chords, the second-chair men snaking the page over desperately, and down comes a full brass choir on "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," and Harpo has got hold of a baseball and is passing it clear across the pit to Chico, and the hubbub keeps warming up and the ball passing until one of them snatches what must have been a violin but looks like a cello and lines it clear out of sight into the wings, and Groucho is dropping his top hat excitedly off the box into the orchestra, whistling with his fingers to get it back up—Hey Shorty, he says to the music lover in a stiff shirt, Hey! Hey Shorty.

This is wonderful while it lasts but it gets anticlimactic as it extends through all the scenes of the opera; and that is the way the picture as a whole goes. There will be stretches of dull clowning, of the boy getting next to the girl; and then there will be something like that perfectly irrelevant four feet of film where the set has three cots and two Marx Brothers asleep, and the third cot has right in the middle of it an alarm clock. One, two, three—you just get time to count the cots and the alarm clock explodes and Harpo automatically raises a twenty-pound mallet and comes down, whango, right through the works of the clock with his eyes still closed, and that is all. That is the way it goes with the picture as a whole, a breakneck crazy business, made violent and living by the presence in it of some impenitently ham and delightful bad boys.

The Marx Brothers' type of humor is frequently not their own; but what is never anyone else's is their ability, when they have got a laugh, to put it over the plate and halfway through the catcher's glove. Having no controlling idea, they cannot make their comedy stick—*i.e.*, you realize even while wiping your eyes well into the second handkerchief that it is nothing so much as a hodge-podge of skylarking, and soon over. Their picture is done the minute it fades on the screen. But the boys themselves are still with us, and I estimate an average period of ten days to three weeks, as the picture gets around, before the American public will be able to open its garbage can in the morning and not duck involuntarily, anticipating that a Marx Brother will pop up and clout it over the head with a sackful of tomatoes.

This fact and the exuberant antic that carries it along will remain for a while as a vague monument, in something more than wax, to a colossal burning energy spent on anything and nothing. With the definite exception of Groucho, who would be funny in still photographs, the Marx Brothers are an uninventive, stupid bunch. They are very much like somebody exploding a blown-up paper bag—all bang and no taste; but they are also irrepressible clowns with a great sense of the ridiculous. They tear into it by guess and by god, they rush through it as though it were meat and they starving; their assurance, appetite and vitality are supreme; they are both great and awful. . . . Other films, still current, that something could be said about: "The 39 Steps," an English thriller, beautifully handled; "Crime and Punishment," both French and

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CORRESPONDENCE

Epic Marches On

SIR: Continuing our discussion about the Epic Plan, The New Republic is right in saying that it makes no difference in the total amount of employment whether the unemployed are given cash doles to spend or whether they are allowed to produce for their own use. You are wrong in your contention that all the unemployed could not be put to work producing for themselves "unless the government is prepared to take over virtually all industry." It would have to take over a percentage of industry equal to the percentage of the unemployed. About one in five of our population is on some kind of charity today, and that means that if the government is to provide a system of production for use for the unemployed, it will have to take over one-fifth of industry, and not "virtually all industry."

You cite the fact that "a large proportion of the unemployed are in industries that make steel, buildings and other capital goods," and you seem to find an insurmountable objection to the unemployed doing this kind of production for themselves. The Epic Plan provides that the unemployed shall build a complete industrial system for themselves. If you are building a social system among approximately twenty-five million people, you have a basis for large-scale production for everything from steel buildings to pencil sharpeners. . . .

You say: "In the meantime we believe it just as effective to advocate advance toward the front door of collectivism as to try to steal in the back door." That such is your belief is a great tragedy, because it means that one of the few liberal journals in America has failed to learn anything whatever from our Epic campaign in California. . . . In the past twenty years I have run for office four times in California. I ran as a candidate of the Socialist Party on a platform that met your formula "to advocate advance toward the front door of collectivism." The largest number of votes I ever got in the entire state of California was about sixty thousand.

So I decided to try a different set of tactics—"putting in the sharp edge of the wedge, instead of the blunt end." What I did was to advocate collectivism for one-fifth of the population instead of five-fifths. I did and am still doing that because everybody admits the grave nature of the emergency caused by unemployment; whereas most Americans think that those who are employed in America at present are getting the best wages in the world and have no cause for complaint. I think the fact that in California we polled 879,000 votes instead of 60,000 votes, is a proof that I was justified in my belief. . . .

Pasadena, Calif. UPTON SINCLAIR.

[To us Mr. Sinclair's proposal to make a separate economic enclave out of the unemployed part of our population, producing everything they need from steel to pencil sharpeners, is fantastic. To cite only one difficulty: unemployed steel workers must, if they are to work in steel mills, be occupied largely in making rails, cars, steel for bridges and steel for industrial and commercial buildings. Are the unemployed to have their own railways, bridges and cities?

Of course, Mr. Sinclair's Epic program attracted more votes than his socialism ever did, but so did Huey Long's "Share-the-Wealth" program. This is not "putting in the sharp end of the wedge." It is offering a false and impractical remedy, which could not have been carried out in California if Mr. Sinclair had been elected there, or in the United States if he were to be elected President. It is building a transitory political movement quite different from the party that we must have if socialism is to be advanced.

A limited number of unemployed can be put to work making useful things under government auspices, and the more the better, so long as the total of employment and production is thereby increased. But we stick to our proposition that anything like full virtually the whole system, and use of that control to produce abundance for all.—THE EDITORS.]

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Three widely varying suggestions for improving economic conditions are offered by New Republic readers this week. B. U. Hiester of Ottawa, Illinois, proposes that the government buy up the surplus of all kinds of non-perishable commodities and issue paper money against this surplus. He thinks the additional currency would stimulate business and the surplus held by the government, to be sold at a favorable time, would ensure the safety of the currency. . . . B. Lowen of Minneapolis frankly wants to turn back the economic clock, and advocates that factories stop using labor-saving machinery and replace machines with men until jobs have been created for all qualified unemployed workers. He says employers may object but thinks that they will have to institute some such plan or face active revolt by the workers. . . . G. W. Wynne of Roanoke, Virginia, wants the A.A.A. made permanent because of its benefits to farmers, and he ridicules critics of its crop-limitation features by pointing out that these same critics seldom object to restriction of output by large producers in the steel and other industries.

On the war-and peace front, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which maintains headquarters at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D. C., sends us a copy of the petition it is now circulating to get citizens of all political views to sign a blanket opposition to war of all kinds. The League wants disarmament made a reality both in the United States and throughout the world and thinks that this country should take the lead in the movement. . . . Out in Chicago, H. E. Biedinger notes that the Chicago Board of Education has ordered the daily singing of the national anthem and a salute to the flag, ostensibly to stir patriotism. Mr. Biedinger observes that it is all too easy to change patriotic fervor to war fervor and says: "No one objects to the emotional stimulus of song; but none of us relishes singing a tune for munitions makers and war profiteers."

A bright newcomer in the field of contemporary periodicals is The People's Press, published at 160 North La Salle Street, Chicago, Illinois, whose first few issues we have received. The People's Press is issued weekly in tabloid newspaper format and it gives an extremely lively illustrated account of the week's events from the standpoint of the worker and the common citizen. Frank Palmer of the Federated Press is editor of the new paper, whose staff includes Arthur Kallet and James Waterman Wise. It is mailed anywhere in the United States for $1 per year. . . . Waldo Frank, chairman of the League of American Writers, writes to tell us of a forthcoming magazine, Decision, a quarterly, the first issue of which is scheduled to appear early in 1936. Mr. Frank says that Decision will attempt to maintain a literary standard comparable with the old Dial and Seven Arts.

Our New York City file this week is headed by a letter from Francis J. Gorman of the United Textile Workers, who urges all persons who live in New York or who may visit the city to be sure to see "Let Freedom Ring," Albert Bein's dramatization of Grace Lumpkin's novel now running at the Broadhurst Theatre. Mr. Gorman praises the play for its true and vitally needed picture of conditions among Southern workers, for its absorbing story as well as sociological content, and calls it "labor's own play." . . . The New Film Alliance writes that it urgently needs part-time assistants. The work of this organization is volunteer and anyone interested in the movement to develop an audience for progressive films is requested to communicate with Edward Kern, secretary of The New Film Alliance at 110 West Fortieth Street, New York City. . . . The Madison House, a settlement on the lower East Side, is trying to build up a library of books for children from seven to sixteen years of age and would appre[illegible]

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Pride and Pomp

Pride and Prejudice, dramatized by Helen Jerome from the Jane Austen novel. The Music Box, November 5, 1935.

Jumbo, libretto by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, music and lyrics by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. The New York Hippodrome, November 16, 1935.

THE CAREER of Miss Austen's book is an old story—written between October, 1796, and the following year, lying in her desk until its publication in 1813, and since then growing steadily into its immortal position. "Pride and Prejudice" in my opinion is one of the half-dozen novels in English that prove to be untouched by time, I should almost say that stand much rereading. In schools it is often assigned to lists of youthful requirements, partly no doubt because of its decorum. What the young think of Jane Austen is their secret; all I can say is that years only can teach us how perfect it is.

There is a special aspect to this novel's perfection that makes me wonder about its average reader and his appreciation. Fielding has his immense canvas, his vigorous toleration and salt of life, Dickens has his qualities too familiar to be detailed, and Thackeray, in "Vanity Fair," at least, certainly comes off, et cetera, et cetera; let us not get into the discussion of other novelists. "Pride and Prejudice" is the one novel, certainly the chief novel, in English that possesses the quality that underlies Molière's "Tartuffe" or "The Misanthrope," or, for that matter, all the best of Molière. I mean the element of tone, a complete and perfect tone that in itself constitutes a language, an abstract and final medium of expression. Everything is scaled into an established proportion and stays in place. An ease and command appear, partly by elimination of excessive emphasis and insistence, partly by a certain lucid reliance on the mind, partly by accepting the materials within acknowledged conventions or forms.

It is necessary to say these things by way of introduction to the point that the play made up from "Pride and Prejudice" begins with the director and ends with the director and only the interspace is filled with the acting. Only from the director can the tone begin at the outset, and only by him can that tone be continued, work unbroken throughout the scenes, and, having pervaded all so far, pervade the whole quality of the play's conclusion. An intense play, a play full of suspense or violence or rough realism, is one thing to direct; the results will often depend on sheer feeling and story. To direct "Pride and Prejudice" requires a complete apperception of genre. The director must have, of course, actors that are cast within the possibilities of the play's demands. But, however good they may be, the director has to blend and emphasize this whole company toward the general tone, exactly as Jane Austen had to take her living characters and equalize them, find the pressure of each and blend their tones, so that nothing might stick out beyond the plane or outline of their design. And so this is where Mr. Robert Sinclair comes in, as the director of the piece. not Mr. Sinclair's first distinguished piece of direction; but it is marked by such taste and realization of values as are not usual in any theatre.

Miss Jerome's dramatization is remarkably faithful to the book. The company is good, especially Miss Lucile Watson as Mrs. Bennet, Miss Helen Chandler as Jane Bennet, and Mr. Percy Waram as Mr. Bennet, flourishing somewhat tartly but happily among those women of his. These actors and others, some American, some English, speak an English curiously better than that of Miss Adrianne Allen in her portrayal of Elizabeth, which, doubtless, would be called the leading role. In Miss Allen's diction you hear too much—certainly it is a great deal too much for Jane Austen—of that fashionable-set-cockney-tinged English that has spread so over the younger London stage. Miss Allen's performance is, nevertheless, agreeable enough, and carries the piece coolly along, a trifle more definite perhaps than it is witty. This, we must remember, is the Elizabeth of whom Miss Austen wrote in a letter, "I must confess I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least I do not know." By way of chastening, it could be said that Jane Austen's Mr. Bennet is a little more caustic than the play allows him, a quality of tartness more easily seen in "Sense and Sensibility," where the novelist lets herself go rather farther. And the Mrs. Bennet of the novel is not quite so engaging a creature as we see in the play. But these blendings are perhaps better for stage uses. Mr. Mielziner's settings and costumes are delightful. The honors remain Jane Austen's and Mr. Sinclair's.

Of "Jumbo" the usual things could be said, such as the relation of the theatre to the circus, the advantage of a stage projecting into the audience, the spirit of make-believe frankly admitted and so forth and so on. The tremendous outlay of this production, its endless profusion of numbers, performers, scenes, memories, costumes, animals and what not make it impossible to convey in writing. There is no harm in that. To almost everybody this entertainment will display an excess, a superabundance, that not seldom defeats itself. The piling up of talent, clothes and effects suggests an overstocked market or else a strange lack of faith in one's leading selections. Nevertheless, there are things enough in this entertainment to delight and astonish and encourage. Mr. Albert Johnson's décor is brilliant and inexhaustible, and that first round curtain of his, full of stars from the inspired lighting, is one of the beautiful things of the season. Some of the most abundant talent in the theatre and circus world is to be found in this production—for instance, the costumes that Mr. Raoul Pène Du Bois designed for the animals. Where is there anything quite like them, in virtuosity, richness and the joy of living? What there is that comes short in "Jumbo" lies partly in the attempt to combine circus, revue numbers and musical comedy. On this side, poverty in the promoters might have helped somewhat. What there is to commend must speak for itself, all that heaped-up, dazzling astonishment and expertness. On this side good eyes and zest in the audience will this an audience is almost harder to

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Winter Book Section

Letter to the Russians about Hemingway [1]

THE NEW book of Ernest Hemingway has been to me a great disappointment. "Green Hills of Africa" is certainly far and away his weakest book, in fact the only really weak book he has written (leaving out of consideration the burlesque "Torrents of Spring").

"Green Hills of Africa" is an account of a hunting expedition, in which "the writer has attempted," as Hemingway says, "to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination." In my opinion, he has not succeeded. The sophisticated technique of the fiction-writer comes to look artificial when it is applied to a series of real happenings; and the necessity of sticking to what really happened prevents the writer from supplying the ideal characters and incidents which give point to a work of fiction. "Green Hills of Africa" is thus an instructive experiment: it brings out very clearly the difference between actual experience and the imaginary experience of fiction, but it is a warning of reefs to steer clear of.

Aside from this—or perhaps for the very reason that he has chosen to treat his material in the wrong way—Hemingway's literary personality appears here in a slightly absurd light. He delivers a self-confident lecture on the high possibilities of prose writing, with the implication that he himself, Hemingway, has realized or hopes to realize these possibilities; and then writes what are certainly, from the point of view of prose, the very worst pages of his life. There is one passage which is hardly even intelligible—the most serious possible fault for a writer who is always insisting on the supreme importance of lucidity. He inveighs with much scorn against the literary life and against the professional literary man of the cities; and then manages to give the impression that he himself is a professional literary man of the most touchy and self-conscious kind. As one of the newspaper writers has said of Hemingway, he went all the way to Africa to hunt and then when he thought he had found a rhinoceros, it turned out to be Gertrude Stein—an old friend and admiration of Hemingway's, who wrote of him disparagingly in her recent autobiography and upon whom Hemingway in "Green Hills of Africa" has taken the opportunity to revenge himself. He affirms in accents of defiance his perfect satisfaction with the hunter's life and his passionate enthusiasm for Africa; and then writes what seems to me the only book I have ever read which makes Africa and its animals seem dull.

When the Soviet critic, I. Kashkeen, who has published in the English edition of International Literature a very able essay on Hemingway—what is in fact perhaps the only serious and thoroughgoing study of him which has yet been written—when Kashkeen comes to read "Green Hills of Africa," he will no doubt find much confirmation for his theory that the author of "In Our Time" has become progressively more sterile and less interesting in proportion as he has become more detached from the great social issues of the day. And it is true that one of the things which strikes us most and which depresses us as we read "Green Hills of Africa" is the apparent drying-up in Hemingway of his interest in his fellow beings. Animals can be made extremely interesting; but the animals in this book are not interesting. Almost the only thing we hear about them is that Hemingway wants to kill them. Nor do we learn much about the natives: there is one fine description of a tribe of marvelous runners but the principal impression we carry away is that the natives were simple people who enormously admired Hemingway. Nor do we learn much more about his hunting companion than that the latter has better luck than Hemingway and inspires Hemingway's envy; nor much more about Mrs. Hemingway than that she is fond of Hemingway. Nor does he seem even to take much real interest in himself: the picture of Hemingway we get seems mainly inspired by the idea which he imagines his public have of him when they read the rubbishy articles he writes for the men's-wear magazine, Esquire.

Yet I am not sure that it is true—as perhaps Kashkeen would conclude—that it is Hemingway's material which is here at fault. It is not the fact that "Green Hills of Africa" deals with an African hunting expedition instead of with the American class struggle which is really at the bottom of its failure; but rather the technical and psychological approach of the writer to his subject. One can imagine the material of "Green Hills of Africa" being handled quite successfully in short stories or as a background to one of Hemingway's novels. But for reasons which I cannot attempt to explain, something frightful seems to happen to Hemingway as soon as he begins to write in the first person. In his fiction, the conflicting elements of his personality, the emotional situations which obsess him, are externalized and objectified; and the result is an art which is severe, intense and deeply serious. But as soon as he talks in his own person, he seems to lose all his capacity for self-criticism and is likely to become fatuous or maudlin. His ideas about life, or rather his sense of what happens and the way in which it happens, is in his stories sunk deep below the surface and is conveyed not by argument or preaching but by directly transmitted emotion: it is turned into something as hard as a crystal and as disturbing as a great lyric. When he expounds this sense of life, however, in his own character of Ernest Hemingway, the Old Master of Key West, he has a way of sounding silly. Perhaps he is beginning to be imposed on by the American publicity legend which has been created about him and which, as Kashkeen has pointed out, has very little to do with what one actually finds in his stories. But, in any case, among his creations, he is certainly his own worst-drawn character, and he is his own worst commentator. His very prose style goes to pot—or rather he [illegible]

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been written in America and one of the finest that is being written anywhere.

This vein of Hemingway maudlin, this vein of unconscious burlesque, had already broken out in the personal interludes of "Death in the Afternoon," his book on bull-fighting, but in that book there was so much objective writing, so much solid information, that these interludes could not spoil it. "Green Hills of Africa" is *all* such an interlude—and I doubt whether it is anything more than an interlude in Hemingway's work as a whole. His last volume of short stories certainly showed a further developing mastery, rather than any degeneration, of his art. One of them, a simple anecdote of a man who goes out to plunder a wreck and finds that he cannot even crack open the port-hole—this short story, with its implications of the irreducible hazards and pains of life and of the code of honor which one must evolve to live among them, is more than worth the whole of the "Green Hills of Africa."

These moral implications of Hemingway, as one finds them in the story I have mentioned, Kashkeen seems to me to underestimate. To the Marxist, it is no doubt true that there should be no irreducible hazards and pains. But these will not be eliminated next year, nor even five years from now, nor even after five years more. And in the meantime? If Hemingway were to address himself to writing about the social conflict, there is no reason to believe that his stories would cease to illustrate the same tragic sense of the way in which things happen. We can get some idea of what we might expect from the introduction he wrote to the exhibition of the drawings of the Spanish revolutionary painter, Luis Quintanilla. He has an acute sense of the cost and danger of doing anything worth doing, including revolution; and he knows that people do not always live to get what they pay for. "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong in the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of those you can be sure that it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry"—says the hero of "A Farewell to Arms." This is not in the least the same thing as saying that there is no use in being good or brave. The truth is that, though, as Kashkeen says, Hemingway is very much given to writing about the end of things, his effect is bracing rather than dispiriting. Is "The Undefeated," which deals with the humiliation and death of an old bull-fighter, really a story of defeat? Of course not. The old man's courage is in itself a victory. It is true that Hemingway writes about decadence, but there is always something else which is opposed to the decadence. He writes about death, but to write tellingly about death you have to have the principle of life.

And is it not true on the highest plane of imaginative writing, the plane on which one must consider Hemingway, that what is written about an old bull-fighter is written, also, about other kinds of men? Is not real genius of moral insight a motor that will start any engine? The non-Marxist who reads a banal Marxist fable, written without real imagination or feeling, does not feel or imagine anything. The Marxist who reads the story of a conflict, though that conflict may have nothing to do with the class struggle, will, if the story is written with passion and skill, identify himself with the hero. Do we not translate what moves us in literature into terms of whatever we do in our lives? frankly a counter-revolutionary. How can we be sure that the reader will translate the hero's counter-revolutionary courage into terms of revolutionary activity? How do we know that he will not simply be persuaded to admire the counter-revolution? We cannot know, of course. But we may be assured that wherever the main current of human hope and progress runs the readers will get out of literature of all kinds the kind of inspiration they need for their own particular activities, the kind of consolation they need for their own particular defeats. That the Soviets assume this to be true is indicated by the fact that they are at present translating wholesale the classics both of antiquity and of the modern world and republishing their own classics with pious care. I observed when I was recently in Russia that even the creations of the counter-revolutionary Dostoevsky were still of interest to Soviet readers and that the government was bringing out his notebooks. And surely there is more in the increasing popularity of Shakespeare on the Soviet stage than a desire on the part of Russian audiences to study the failures of feudal princes. Individuals in Russia still suffer their failures, their griefs and their frustrations; and people still go to the theatre to have their souls purged through pity and terror.

I feel that Soviet critics, and also Marxist critics elsewhere, sometimes underestimate the positive qualities of modern non-Marxist masters. A writer like Kashkeen might reply that today the only positive forces are those which are working for the destruction of the rotten old capitalist world and for the realization of human possibilities through socialism. I can only adduce, as an example of the law of moral interchangeability which I would invoke in behalf of Hemingway, that on my recent visit to Russia the passage from literature which came most often into my head, which seemed to me to express most eloquently the effect of the Revolution on all kinds and conditions of people in the Soviet Union, was from the writings of that arch-bourgeois, arch-snob, arch-esthete and arch-decadent, Marcel Proust. It is the conclusion of the section on the death of one of his characters, the novelist Bergotte, in which Proust speaks of the moral obligations which make themselves felt in spite of everything, and which seem to reach humanity from some source outside its own wretched self—obligations "invisible only to fools—and are they really even to them?" Proust was speaking here of the obligations of the artist—for him, in his world of dissolving values, art was the only thing which seemed to keep its validity and endure. But when I was traveling in the Soviet Union, the words would come back into my mind and I would find that the obligations involved in the ideal of the Leninist tradition, permeating even parts of society, motivating even individuals, by whom at first sight it seemed least to be felt, had substituted themselves for the obligations involved in Proust's ideal of art. "Invisible only to fools—and are they really even to them?" EDMUND WILSON.

Hunter

Safe is the man with blunderbuss
Who stalks the hippopotamus
On Niger's bank, or scours the Veldt
To rape the lion of his pelt;
But deep in peril he who sits
At home to rack his lonely wits
And there do battle, grim and blind,

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It Happened There

Sawdust Caesar, by George Seldes. New York: Harper and Brothers. 475 pages. $3.

GEORGE SELDES begins the best book on Mussolini to date with a warning to Americans that they too face fascism. He therefore seeks to arm them against the threat by showing them how the trick was turned in Italy. "It can't happen here," the optimists are still saying, in spite of Sinclair Lewis. "Well," Mr. Seldes answers, "it happened there." And he proceeds to tell the story.

Mussolini the boy was alternately spoiled by an indulgent mother and browbeaten by a violent father who, as a good Socialist, named his son after the Mexican revolutionary, Benito Juarez. This, Mr. Seldes thinks, is the key to his character. Expelled from school for bullying smaller boys and pulling a dagger on older ones, young Benito soon gained fame as an orator, rebel, gambler, booze-fighter and hero of the bawdy houses. His working hours he devoted to socialist journalism and to strike activities. He used to disprove the existence of God by challenging the supernatural powers to strike him dead, but he had less difficulty attracting the attention of the temporal powers, who kept throwing him into jail. The first time he attended a League session at Geneva, the Swiss authorities had to destroy his police record to avoid the embarrassment of arresting the Italian Premier as a common thief—not as a revolutionary—the moment he crossed the frontier.

Mussolini owed his start as a labor journalist to Dr. Angelica Balabanov, who had worked with both Lenin and Trotsky and who took pity on the young exhibitionist. Then, in 1914, came the first great betrayal, engineered through Marcel Cachin, now leader of the French Communists, and Charles Dumas, of the French war-propaganda department, who turned over a lump sum of 15,000 francs and guaranteed 10,000 francs a month to finance a new daily, Il Popolo d'Italia. When Mussolini's new mouthpiece, for which he deserted the editorship of the Socialist Avanti, finally broke the labor front and got Italy into the War, his short and discreditable period of active service was followed by more newspaper activity.

With the Armistice came a period of eclipse. After helping d'Annunzio in a subordinate capacity at Fiume, Mussolini threw himself into strike activities, offering his services both to capital and labor. Again he sided against the class from which he had sprung, and from 1920 through 1922 came into frequent conflict with Don Sturzo's Popular Italian Party, which then outnumbered the Socialists. In fact, the March on Rome, executed by a few thousand bedraggled Fascists, many of whom did not dare to show their black shirts, came in the nick of time, as prosperity was reviving, taxes on large fortunes were increasing and the communist movement had all but vanished. Mr. Seldes attributes Mussolini's *coup d'état* to a spineless premier, a traitorous army (especially the officers) and a stupid king. Then came the murder of Matteotti and again Mussolini barely survived the hostility of the Italian masses.

The bulk of Mr. Seldes' book rehearses the blunders and outrages of the Fascist regime. The chapters on finance and on the suppression of the Freemasons present much new information, but the rest makes dull reading. For, in spite of the inherent interest of his material and his theme, Mr. Seldes' book does not come to life. Having shown how Mussolini rose to power, he does not tell us why liberty

tions, moral values or economic theories. Without cleaving to the Stalinist, Trotskyite, Fascist, Catholic or any other "line," the writer on world affairs can at least take the simple convictions that Frank H. Simonds acquired last year when Dr. Brooks Emeny explained to him the importance of raw materials in a modern economy. Mr. Seldes lets us detect a point of view here and there, but too little special pleading can be as fatal to a book as too much.

QUINCY HOWE.

Never the Twain

Dr. Ibrahim, by John Knittel. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. $2.50.

The Asiatics, by Frederic Prokosch. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

KIPLING may not have known much about truth but he knew the kind of truth he liked; and his tastes were popular. His truths are brutal, plausible and easily understood: "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." These two books are dedicated to the proposition that Kipling was a liar. "Dr. Ibrahim" attempts to show that East is a consciously inferior form of West, while "The Asiatics" intimates that East and West are merely different frames of mind. They show the meeting of East and West, and make a convincing recognition scene of it. It is an argument that is easy enough to take sides on, but perhaps requires more common sense than "knowledge" to decide. If the races of men are really different breeds of beings—in other words, if Kipling was right—then the only possible thing for us to do is to rejoin the British Empire, dragoon the rest of Europe as auxiliaries and go down fighting against the hordes of Asia. That's what a lot of Kiplingesque, pseudo-Spartan people would like to see. But not Messrs. Knittel and Prokosch; and not I.

Mr. Knittel, indeed has a sizable axe to grind. His story of a native Egyptian doctor's career reads in large part like an indictment of British colonial rule. Ibrahim, the poor Egyptian boy who wants to serve his country by becoming a great doctor, finds his naïve devotion blocked at every turn by venality, inefficiency, red tape. He finally gives up the hopeless fight, leaves the government service, and goes to England to make his pile and his name. When he has attained both, tuberculosis drives him home to die, and he spends his last days radiating personal prestige and a chastened but still optimistic nationalist spirit. With Dr. Ibrahim's desire to reshape his country into an improved version of Europe the reader may or may not sympathize, but most of us will lend a friendly ear to his under-dog indignation. As for the book itself, it's both too anecdotal and too tendentious to be rated in the first class, and its characters are too typical to do more than represent a point of view. But that point of view is as humane as Kipling's was barbaric.

Mr. Prokosch is apparently a newcomer to the literary scene, but he seems perfectly at home in it. "The Asiatics" is a realistic fairy tale, along picaresque lines, that recounts the adventures of a young American wandering through Asia. The narrative has neither beginning, middle nor end: it starts in Syria and ends as suddenly as it began, in Indo-China. The narrator's adventures, while they are told with disarming candor and set against local backgrounds that appear as if they were described

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is punctuated. The hero does a job of dope-smuggling, is thrown into prison in Turkey, flies across the deserts of Persia, becomes the honored guest of a maharajah, falls in love, works as assistant to a doctor in the wilds of Indo-China, double-crosses his casual comrades and is cheated by them in turn. And whatever happens to him and wherever he goes, the same characters keep popping up; so that the surface events give the same sense of unreality as a Burton Holmes travelogue peopled by movie comedians. The kaleidoscopic figures are mostly two-dimensional, even shadowy, and yet through them you begin to see the outlines of a reality that Mr. Prokosch calls Asia. That reality may seem more mental than geographical, but it is a state of mind that a Westerner of these days can appreciate. This in itself is a geographical conquest. Mr. Prokosch says of one of his people—and the remark typifies the spirit of the book—"Seen from the outside, she was a laughable creature, like everyone else in the world; pompous, decaying, mad. Seen from the inside, even if only for an instant, she grew like everyone else into a tragic and terrifying shape." It would not be true to say that "The Asiatics" gives us more than a hint of this interior reality, and the hint is sensuous rather than intellectual; but to those who are still in possession of their senses, the hint is enough.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

The Turning Point

With Napoleon in Russia: The Memoirs of General de Caulaincourt. Edited by George Libaire. New York: William Morrow and Company. 446 pages. $3.75.

IN 1789 the Marquis de Caulaincourt, then in his sixteenth year, was a second lieutenant in the cavalry. Following the example of his father, who was a general, he accepted the Revolution and served it in many campaigns. He also accepted the Empire and was appointed Grand Ecuyer, or master of the horse. The title conveys no real idea of his duties, which were multifarious and required his constant presence with the emperor, in peace and in war. After serving four years as Ambassador to St. Petersburg, he came back in 1811 to occupy his old position at court. He was opposed to Napoleon's apparent determination to break with Alexander and advised strongly against the Russian campaign. Nevertheless he was at the emperor's side throughout that campaign, and when Napoleon left the army on December 5, 1812, and rushed back to France, Caulaincourt was by his side, in sleigh and carriage, through thirteen days and nights, until they entered the Tuilleries.

The notes he kept of the progress of the invasion until the French entered Moscow, of the disastrous retreat until Smorgoni was reached, and of Napoleon's conversation during the long journey from Smorgoni to Paris, Caulaincourt embodied in memoirs that were not published until 1933. The text has been somewhat abridged by Mr. Libaire, to avoid repetition or the recital of events in which Caulaincourt had no part. The translation is highly readable, and the editor's introduction and notes are brief and to the point. A minor criticism would be that names like Berthier, Ney, Davout, etc., might well have been substituted for imperial titles like Prince of Neuchâtel, Duke of Elchingen, Prince of Eckmühl, etc. As it is, one is constantly obliged to refer to the biographical notes in order to ascertain who is who.

light on the character of Napoleon, on the motives of his policy, or on the Russian campaign; rather do they confirm the essential conclusions reached by the best historians. The apparently inexhaustible energy of the man is brought vividly before us, particularly in the narrative of the secret journey back to France; his copious conversation—more in the nature of a monologue—in explanation and justification of his policies, was an outflow of this energy: the man had to be doing something while he was cooped up, half-frozen, in sleigh and carriage. Caulaincourt dwells on his winning ways and fascinating geniality, making it clear that Napoleon exercised this personal charm quite consciously and to practical purpose. "When I need anyone," he said "I don't make too fine a point about it; I would kiss his —."

The motive force of the Russian expedition is seen to be the never-ending war with England. After Trafalgar, Napoleon could strike back at England only through the Continental System, the universal embargo on trade with England. Many of the Russian nobles were being ruined by the loss of the English market for the products of their estates, and under pressure from them Alexander was obliged to admit English goods in American ships. Thus Napoleon arrived at the conclusion that to "crush" England he would have to "crush" the only Continental power strong enough to join forces with her.

But no sooner did Napoleon enter Russia than the dissolution of his army began. One of the essential elements of the Napoleonic strategy was speed. To acquire speed, the army was freed from dependence on the cumbrous magazine trains of eighteenth-century warfare; it had to live off the country. But the poverty of Russia, her sparse population, her bad roads, her general economic backwardness, made it extremely difficult for the vast army to find supplies. The destruction of the countryside and of towns by the retreating Russians was incomprehensible to Napoleon: "These people burn their houses to prevent our sleeping in them for a night!" These Russians were just as absurd as the Spaniards, who preferred their benighted, incompetent, medieval government and the Inquisition to the able, modern administration of the French. In Italy and Germany, in Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, the French found allies among the more advanced classes, but not in Spain or in Russia: there were no such classes there.

Borodino was the bloodiest battle ever fought by Napoleon. "These Russians let themselves be killed like automatons. . . . This does not help us at all," Napoleon said while the battle was in progress. And again: "We shall win the battle. The Russians will be crushed, but it will not be conclusive if I do not take prisoners." But there was to be no Russian Ulm. On the contrary, during the French retreat it was the famous General Augereau who surrendered with more than two thousand men, and General Partonneaux who was captured with an entire division.

The destruction of the army on the retreat was completed under Murat, whom Napoleon left in command when he hastened back to France. Napoleon knew that Murat "is a brave man on the battlefield, but he has no head"; but Murat was his brother-in-law and King of Naples. In this case as in so many others, the dynastic interests of Napoleon played havoc with his plans. The man who rose to unprecedented height when he was serving the interests of the French bourgeoisie, was hurled down when he began to rely on his "star," that is to say, on his own sovereign

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Informal Dispatch

I Write As I Please, by Walter Duranty. New York: Simon and Schuster. 349 pages. $3.

THE TITLE of this book may suggest to some that the author, now that he is no longer the permanent representative of The New York Times in Moscow, has decided to tell the whole story—which many believe we periodic visitors to the Soviet Union do not do. But it is not at all the type of book—of which we have had several recent examples—that reveals nothing in particular except an individual disillusionment or bias. What Duranty gives us here is a most useful account of his methods of work and his views regarding his profession, illustrated by incidents that could not be included in the formal structure of a dispatch or an article. He wished to write without attention to chronology, outline or even style, just as he would talk. In this sense Walter Duranty writes as he pleases.

The result is a most interesting narrative and at the same time a valuable addition to the interpretations of the Revolution. Duranty gives much enlightening detail on personalities and on outstanding events. And he makes it clear why his current cable interpretations always revealed a remarkably keen feeling for a situation and its trends. For he admits that he often tried to think as the Bolshevik leaders must have been thinking, although this would possibly get him into trouble with readers who were thinking in a quite different economic setting and political atmosphere. Thus, for example, it was clear to Duranty that the private traders of the period of 1921-27—the Nepmen—would eventually have to go, as the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie had gone. When the time-table of the Revolution called for their liquidation, his cable emphasized the logic rather than the ruthlessness of the measure, for he forgot, he explains, that "their fate would seem worthy of sympathy to 99 percent of my readers."

The first chapters on the author's experiences at the Western Front and later in the fighting in the Baltic countries do not seem to be of particular interest as one reads them. But when one comes to the main part of the book, covering the years in the Soviet Union, one sees why they are included. Accustomed to witnessing violence and suffering, Duranty did not allow the violence and suffering that accompanied the internal struggle of the Revolution to blind him to other features of Bolshevism. The pictures he recalled of the wounded being sent back from the fronts made him view with more equanimity train-loads of kulaks transported to the northern lumber camps. In both instances it was a ruthless process, but in the second there seemed to be a constructive aim.

Duranty's constant effort to understand the peculiar Bolshevik psychology with which he had to deal and which he was trying to interpret to American readers, is indicated in one incident. A Soviet official was explaining to the group of foreign correspondents the new constitution of the Soviet Union and, in interpreting one paragraph, remarked that the instrument had been drawn up so as to cover the possibility of the future inclusion of such countries as Germany, England or even America. Duranty writes that he was "secretly impressed" by the attitude revealed in the remark, while the others saw in it only impudence. I have seen so many similar scenes in the Soviet Union that I wish to emphasize this instance of Duranty's technique and this illustration of his perspective, he made it a rule never to remain in the Soviet Union for any longer period than four months at a time.

In his last pages the author defines the "full real socialism" which he insists exists in the Soviet Union, utterly different from the "pseudo-socialism" or the "war-socialism" of the present regimes in Italy and Germany. He notes the use of the word "we" instead of "I," of "our" instead of "mine," on all sides and among all groups, and adds: "Nothing that may be said abroad about the tyranny and high-handedness of the Bolshevik regime can alter the fact that the Russian masses speak of "our" country, "our" technicians, "our" successes and "our" failures. Using a story from folklore, he suggests that the "life" of what he calls "a new jump in human progress" is concealed in the idea: "Not mine for me but ours for us." Should one relate this to the fact, which Duranty also emphasizes, and repeatedly, that "Russia is Asiatic" and that "the multifarious people of the U.S.S.R. are Asiatic-minded"?

SAMUEL N. HARPER.

Boy With His Hair Cut Short

Sunday shuts down on this twentieth-century evening.
The L passes. Twilight and bulb define
the brown room, the overstuffed plum sofa,
the boy and the girl's thin hands above his head.
A neighbor radio sings stocks, news, serenade.

He sits at the table, head down, the young clear neck exposed,
watching the drugstore sign from the tail of his eye,
tattoo of neon until the eye blears, while his
solicitous tall sister, simple in blue, bending
behind him, cuts his hair with her cheap shears.

The arrow's electric red always reaches its mark,
successful neon! He coughs, impressed by that precision.
His child's forehead, forever protected by his cap,
is bleached against the lamplight as he turns head
and steadies to let the feather snippets drop.

Erasing the failure of weeks with level fingers,
she sleeks the soft hair, combing: "You'll look fine tomorrow!
You'll surely find something, they can't keep turning you down;
the finest gentleman's not so trim as you!" Smiling, he raises
the adolescent forehead wrinkling ironic now.

He sees his decent suit laid out, new-pressed,
his carfare on the shelf. He lets his head fall, meeting
her earnest hopeless look, seeing the sharp blades splitting,
the darkened room, the impersonal sign, her motion,
the blue vein, bright on her temple, pitifully beating.

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One Hundred Notable Books: 1935

Biography and Memoirs

Mazzini, by Stringfellow Barr. Holt. $2.75
Fatherland, by Karl Billinger. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.
Poor John Fitch, by Thomas Boyd. Putnam's. $3.
With Napoleon in Russia: Memoirs of General de Caulaincourt. Edited by George Libaire. Morrow. $3.75.
Amy Lowell, by S. Foster Damon. Houghton Mifflin. $5.
Life with Father, by Clarence Day. Knopf. $2.
I Write as I Please, by Walter Duranty. Simon and Schuster. $3.
R. E. Lee, by Douglas Southall Freeman. Vols. III and IV. Scribner's. $3.75 each.
If It Die: Autobiography of André Gide. Random House. $5.
Francis the First, by Francis Hackett. Doubleday, Doran. $3.
The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges; The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon. Oxford, 2 vols., $10.
Facing Two Ways, by Baroness Shidzué Ishimoto. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.50.
We Who Are About to Die, by David Lamson. Scribner's. $2.50.
Seven Pillars of Wisdom, by T. E. Lawrence. Doubleday, Doran. $5.
North to the Orient, by Anne Lindbergh. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.
The Autobiography of Michel de Montaigne, edited by Marvin Lowenthal. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.
The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. International. $3.50.
Vachel Lindsay, by Edgar Lee Masters. Scribner's. $3.
Karl Marx, by Franz Mehring. Covici, Friede. $5.
Louis Sullivan, by Hugh Morrison. Norton. $4.
Mark Twain's Notebook, edited by Albert Bigelow Paine. Harpers. $4.
Singing in the Wilderness: A Salute to John James Audubon, by Donald Culross Peattie. Putnam's. $2.50.
Byron: The Years of Fame, by Peter Quennell. Viking. $3.50.
Crown of Glory, by O. W. Riegel. Yale U. $3.
Old Jules, by Mari Sandoz. Little, Brown. $3.
Sawdust Caesar, by George Seldes. Harpers. $3.
Personal History, by Vincent Sheean. Doubleday, Doran. $3.
I Change Worlds, by Anna Louise Strong. Holt. $3.
A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.
Speak to the Earth, by Vivienne de Watteville. Smith and Haas. $3.

Fiction

Act of Darkness, by John Peale Bishop. Scribner's. $2.50.
Europa, by Robert Briffault. Scribner's. $2.75.
The House of Earth (a trilogy including "The Good Earth," "Sons" and "A House Divided"), by Pearl [illegible]
The Stars Look Down, by A. J. Cronin. Little, Brown. $2.50.
Honey in the Horn, by H. L. Davis. Harpers. $2.50.
Studs Lonigan: A Trilogy, by James T. Farrell. Vanguard. $3.
Pylon, by William Faulkner. Smith and Haas. $2.50.
Time Out of Mind, by Rachel Field. Macmillan. $2.50.
Vein of Iron, by Ellen Glasgow. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.
Claudius the God, by Robert Graves. Smith and Haas. $3.
Don Segundo Sombra, by Ricardo Güiraldes. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.
The Furys, by James Hanley. Macmillan. $2.50.
Doctor Ibrahim, by John Knittel. Stokes. $2.50.
It Can't Happen Here, by Sinclair Lewis. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.
Young Joseph, by Thomas Mann. Knopf. $2.50.
The World from Below, by Jules Romains. Knopf. $2.50.
Call It Sleep, by Henry Roth. Ballou. $2.50
From the Kingdom of Necessity, by Isidor Schneider. Putnam's. $2.50.
Pro Patria, by Ramón J. Sender. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.
Seeds of Tomorrow, by Mikhail Sholokhov. Knopf. $2.50.
Heaven's My Destination, by Thornton Wilder. Harpers. $2.50.
Of Time and the River, by Thomas Wolfe. Scribner's. $3.

Poetry and Criticism

The Dog Beneath the Skin, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. Random House. $1.50.
Murder in the Cathedral, by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace. $1.25.
Chorus for Survival, by Horace Gregory. Covici, Friede. $2.
Dance, by Lincoln Kirstein. Putnam's. $3.75.
Collected Poems: 1929-1933, by C. Day Lewis. Random House. $2.50.
Selected Poems, by Marianne Moore. Macmillan. $2.50.
King Jaspar, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan. $2.
Theory of Flight, by Muriel Rukeyser. Yale. $2.
Collected Plays of William Butler Yeats. Macmillan. $3.50.

Science and Philosophy

The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, by Henri Bergson. Holt. $3.
Gestalt Phychology, by George W. Hartmann. Ronald Press. $3.50.
Outposts of Science, by Bernard Jaffe. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.
Genetics, by H. S. Jennings. Norton. $4.
Race Differences, by Otto Klineberg. Harpers. $2.50.
Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, by Margaret Mead. Morrow. $3.
A History of Science, Technology and Philosophy in the

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The Mind and Society, by Vilfredo Pareto. Edited by Arthur Livingston. Harcourt, Brace. 4 vols., $20.
The Thought and Character of William James, by Ralph Barton Perry. Little, Brown. 2 vols., $12.
Rats, Lice and History, by Hans Zinsser. Little, Brown. $2.75.

General

The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, edited by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson. Macmillan. 15 vols., $112.50.
Columbia University Encyclopedia, edited by C. F. Ansley. Columbia. $17.50.
The History of Western Civilization, by Harry Elmer Barnes. Harcourt, Brace. 2 vols., $10.
It Seems to Me: 1925-1935, by Heywood Broun. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.
The Russian Revolution, by William Henry Chamberlin. Macmillan. 2 vols., $10.
Government in Business, by Stuart Chase. Macmillan. $2.
Economic Planning, by G. D. H. Cole. Knopf. $3.
The Crisis of the Middle Class, by Lewis Corey. Covici, Friede. $2.50.
Liberalism and Social Action, by John Dewey. Minton, Balch. $1.50.
Black Reconstruction, by W. E. B. DuBois. Harcourt, Brace. $4.50.
Dictionary of Modern American Usage, by H. W. Horwill. Oxford. $3.25.
Dawn Over Samarkand, by Joshua Kunitz. Covici, Friede. $3.
The State in Theory and Practice, by Harold J. Laski. Viking. $3.
The Chart of Plenty, by Harold Loeb and Associates. Viking. $2.50.
The Road to War: America, 1914-1917, by Walter Millis. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.
Income and Economic Progress, by Harold G. Moulton. Brookings. $2.
Steel: Dictator, by Harvey O'Connor. Reynal and Hitchcock-John Day. $3.
Must We Fight in Asia? by Nathaniel Peffer. Harpers. $2.50.
Black Tents of Arabia, by Carl R. Raswan. Little, Brown. $4.
The Nazi Dictatorship, by Frederick L. Schuman. Knopf. $3.
Eyes on the World, edited by M. Lincoln Schuster. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.
Cabins in the Laurel, by Muriel Earley Sheppard. North Carolina. $3.
The Economic Consequences of the New Deal, by Benjamin Stolberg and Warren Jay Vinton. Harcourt, Brace. $1.
The Nature of Capitalist Crisis, by John Strachey. Covici, Friede. $3.
The Campaign of the Marne—1914, by Sewell T. Tyng. Longmans, Green. $3.75.
Quack! Quack! by Leonard Woolf. Harcourt, Brace. $2.
My Country and My People, by Lin Yutang. Reynal and Hitchcock-John Day. $3.

This list, compiled by the New Republic staff with the help of our reviewers, is intended to cover the hundred books of 1935 that have the most importance for our own times. The "best" book [illegible]

Science: Soviet Style

Men and Mountains: Man's Victory over Nature, by M. Ilin. Translated by Beatrice Kinkead. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 330 pages, illustrated. $2.50.

THE ENGINEER-AUTHOR of "New Russia's Primer" has, in Gorky's words, written "a prose-poem about what is happening at the present time" in the land of the Hammer and the Sickle. More than that, he has written a drama of human energy striving, by the aid of science and with the mighty force of a collective will, to "change the world." Deserts, valleys, rivers, steppes, oceans and mountains are being studied as a General Staff might study the elements of a projected campaign—a campaign, however, from which both sides, nature and man, emerge victorious. Read, for example, of the battle against the deserts which make up one-seventh of Soviet territory and of the efforts to find just the right balance between the forces of wind, water, sand and vegetation; discover for yourself some of the remarkable achievements of the Soviet plant institutes and how new species are "sent to school" for the benefit of all. Here the Caspian Sea is being "organized" for greater usefulness; there the Volga and other rivers are being "bridled" to assist industry with power and the collective farms with irrigation canals. Even the weather, ocean currents and earthquakes are regarded as possible allies of the proletariat and, through them, of the future socialist society. Mr. Ilin writes at the conclusion of his fascinating book:

> Where the old order rules, the world is all divided up into fragments. Nature is broken up and the will of the people who live in the world. . . . Under the old order everything is cut up into bits, torn to pieces. The new order must assemble the world. It must rescue nature from its innumerable owners and make it the common property of all who work. It must gather people into one united army of work, into one classless society . . . unite all the different sciences into one science.

HAROLD WARD.

Beauty in Solitude

Speak to the Earth, by Vivienne de Watteville. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 343 pages. $3.

VIVIENNE DE WATTEVILLE as a child spent her holidays in a wild and lonely part of Norway, where she came to feel at home. As a young woman, she accompanied her father on an African hunting and collecting trip which ended when he was fatally mauled by a lion. Four years later she set out on another African adventure, to live among and photograph elephants and other wild animals. Obtaining permission to do this proved difficult, but finally she succeeded in gaining admission to the Southern Masai Game Reserve near the Tanganyika-Kenya border, on the understanding that she would kill no game. The story of this undertaking is told here in a book as enchanting as it is unusual. Miss de Watteville successfully stalked and photographed suspicious elephants and was unsuccessfully stalked herself by lean and hungry lions. She lived for two months in an Alpine hut on the slopes of Mount Kenya (almost directly over the Equator) exploring glaciers and collecting botanical specimens. Once she and her native servants [illegible]

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most equally—her writing on this point is convincing—in danger and in hard-won safety. Above all, she delighted in the beauty and solitude of the African wilderness. She communicates the joy of all these experiences, for she is a naturalist who is also a first-rate writer.

MARTHA GRUENING.

Mr. President

The Gay Reformer: Profits Before Plenty Under Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Mauritz A. Hallgren. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 342 pages. $2.75.

NO MAN since the great Alexander has ever had a more exhilarating game to play, or has played it more jauntily, than Franklin D. Roosevelt. His pawns are one hundred and twenty-five million every-day citizens, his attack pieces are trade unions, captains of industry, currency systems and Cabinet members; the opposing king who must be checkmated is the greatest depression in history. Some of his moves are in straight lines, some are oblique, some go around corners. Often they are backwards. But there is no doubt of his earnest and sincere desire to win.

Mr. Hallgren has given us an illuminating and alarming picture of the character and consequences of such a game when played by "the good man in politics." Writing dispassionately, without violence or vituperation, and basing his analysis on unimpeachable materials, largely the recorded statements of Mr. Roosevelt himself, he portrays the inevitable reactions of a man who attempts to direct the affairs of a great nation in the midst of a world crisis on the basis of attitudes, prejudices, traditions and loyalties derived from the experiences of boyhood and youth in a well established, orderly, economically secure and conventionally benevolent household. Mr. Hallgren states that "the pragmatism he studied under William James probably went far to shape his later attitudes." One wishes that he had also told us what economics, and under whom, the undergraduate Roosevelt studied, for the conservatism, inflexibility and unimaginativeness of his economic doctrines have certainly contributed as much to his inability to measure up to the requirements of his great opportunity and responsibility as his family background has.

Mr. Roosevelt is a good American to the extent that he is "ready to try anything once." As he himself said in connection with his agricultural program, "I tell you frankly" —how effectively he uses that word—"that it is a new and untrod path, but I tell you with equal frankness that an unprecedented condition calls for new means to rescue agriculture." This experimental attitude is congenial to the American temperament. But we cannot forget that in all matters of technical administration we expect the expert to have done his experimenting previously in the laboratory. We do not want him to experiment on the job. This is precisely what the President has done. Lacking any foundation of emancipated, realistic economic theory or any true comprehension of the dynamic social pressures surging around him, he was not prepared, in spite of his experience as Governor, to analyze the various expedients that came to his attention or to predict the outcome of their application with the degree of precision that is expected of the administrative engineer, even in the field of social and political relationships.

Partly as a result, we have the amazing series of contradictions, inconsistencies and reversals that Mr. Hallgren [illegible] Mr. Roosevelt [illegible] against the opposing party, but in his own administration. A single example must suffice. "In that part of his Brooklyn campaign speech in which he denounced Herbert Hoover for having intimated that the country was once in danger of going off the gold standard, he had said that this threat was 'a libel on the credit of the United States.' . . . Yet within a few weeks of his assumption of power he was himself to repudiate this sacred covenant."

As far as any central purpose can be discerned in the Roosevelt administration, it is to protect and perpetuate the capitalistic system. Since this is based on private profits, and since profits are dependent on scarcity, the President was driven irrevocably to the adoption of various devices to produce an artificial scarcity—a course of action which, when proposed by Herbert Hoover, he had ridiculed as unworkable, while Democratic leaders denounced it as "economic blasphemy."

The enduring tragedy of Franklin D. Roosevelt and of his world must be that, confronted with an unprecedented opportunity for constructive leadership, he was by birth, experience and temperament precluded from comprehending that the capitalistic system is a worn-out, self-destructive anachronism, and from acting accordingly.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD.

Big Old Lies

Mules and Men, by Zora Neale Hurston. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippcott Company. 343 pages. $3.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON went South to her native Florida to gather and record the folk tales she had heard in her childhood. She made Eatonville, the Negro town where she was born, a sort of base, from which she prowled about the countryside, living in turpentine camps, railroad camps, a phosphate mining village. Everywhere she went, she inveigled people into telling her all sorts of tales—"big old lies," a townsman called them.

But Miss Hurston did more than record these tales. Alert and keenly observant, she studied the *mores,* folkways and superstitions, the social and economic life of these people as an essential background for her book. As a result "Mules and Men" is more than a collection of folklore. It is a valuable picture of the life of the unsophisticated Negro in the small towns and backwoods of Florida. To this Miss Hurston has added a revealing section on hoodoo as practised in New Orleans, where she was initiated into the mysteries of the cult.

Her stories are of wide variety. Some are animal tales of the Uncle Remus stripe. Some attempt to explain everyday social and natural phenomena. Others are rooted in the slave era and bring out the nuances of race relations. Some are fables. Still others are obviously spontaneous creations resembling the exaggerated tales of youngsters engaged in a story-telling contest. In all of the stories, the imaginative gift of the Negroes who passed them on is matched by the author's own talent for story telling. Miss Hurston presents her material with little attempt to evaluate it or to trace its origin. She records things as they were told to her, in an intimate and good style; and the intimacy she established with her subjects, she reproduces on the printed page, enabling the reader to feel himself a part of that circle.

The value of "Mules and Men" is enhanced by the Covarrubias illustrations and by an appendix containing a

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Children's Book List

Ages Four and Five

THERE WAS TAMMY, by Dorothy and Marguerite Bryan (32 pages; Dodd, Mead, $1). A story about a beloved little dog, who insisted on going on a family picnic when he wasn't wanted. A pattern children will love. Good illustrations.

TOPSY, by Marjorie Flack (32 pages; Doubleday, Doran, $1). Delightful story of a cocker spaniel. Many clear, simple pictures.

ARAMINTA, by Eva Knox Evans (84 pages; Minton, Balch, $2). A little colored girl visits her grandmother in the country. Authentic and amusing—not silly.

SUGAR PLUM HOUSE, by Lois Lenski (32 pages; Harpers, $1). Entertaining story of a well ordered family home invaded by a puppy.

SUNG UNDER THE SILVER UMBRELLA (211 pages; Macmillan, $2). A very good and much-needed anthology of poetry, selected by the Literature Committee of the Association for Childhood Education.

CHRISTOPHER, by Marjorie Flack (36 pages; Scribner's, $.75). What happened to a little dog when he was all clean after a bath.

WE GO TO NURSERY SCHOOL, by Marjorie Poppleton and William E. Blatz (62 pages; Morrow, $1). Photographs and simple text. A child's day in nursery school.

A LITTLE LAMB, by Helen and Alf Evers (52 pages; Farrar and Rinehart, $.75). The adventures of Mary's little lamb after the teacher turned him out of school. Droll pictures.

WAIT FOR WILLIAM, by Marjorie Flack (34 pages; Houghton Mifflin, $1). Three children go to see the circus parade.

Ages Six to Eight

LITTLE ONES, by Dorothy Kunhardt (80 pages; Viking, $2). An unusually beautiful book. All the details that children observe and enjoy in baby animals are described in rhythmic prose. Charmingly illustrated by Kurt Wiese.

GONE IS GONE, by Wanda Gág (56 pages; Coward McCann, $1). An old peasant tale of the man who wanted to do the housework and the attendant difficulties. Very funny.

WHO GOES THERE, by Dorothy Lathrop (38 pages; Macmillan, $1.50). A little boy and girl plan a picnic for their friends in the woods. Beautiful pictures of the small wood animals.

FUN AT HAPPY ACRES, by Ruth C. Barlow (94 pages; Crowell, $2). Beautiful photographs by Melvin Martinson of farm animals and activities. Recommended for school use.

DANNY'S COUNTRY STORE, by Helen Fuller Orton (108 pages; Stokes, $1.35). Easy reading. A simple factual story of a small boy's experiences working in a grocery store.

HERE COMES PETER, by Verna Hills (60 pages; Lothrop, Lee, Shepard, $1.50). Easy reading. Realistic tales of a youngster who lived in the suburbs.

LUCKY MRS. TICKLEFEATHER, by Dorothy Kunhardt (64 pages; Harcourt, Brace, $1.25). A completely nonsensical book. Very funny illustrations.

GRINDSTONE FARM, by Henry B. Lent (127 pages; Macmillan, $1.75). A mine of information about farming—showing uses of modern machinery. Excellent for school as well as home.

TALES FROM UNCLE REMUS, by Joel Chandler Harris (62 pages; Houghton Mifflin, $1). A new edition of the inimitable stories, with charming pictures.

CHILDREN OF THE NORTH LIGHTS, by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire (40 pages; Viking, $2). A beautiful picture book. Slight text about a Lapp family.

THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN WHO USED HER HEAD, by Hope Newell (64 pages; Lothrop, Lee, Shepard, $1). Very charming story of how the old woman supplied her wants by brilliant head work.

MR. TIDY PAWS, by Frances Clark Sayers (64 pages; Viking, $ [illegible] graphs by Zhenya Gay. Well told story of a

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Ages Nine to Eleven

AUTOMOBILES, by Franklin M. Reed (92 pages; Crowell, $2). From raw material to their part in the social scheme. Splendid photographs.

SEEING STARS, by W. B. White (62 pages; Hartes, $.10). An excellent manual for finding the major constellations, with simple facts about the stars.

ALONG THE HILL, by Carroll Lane Fenton (96 pages; Reynal and Hitchcock, $1.25). A handbook of simple geological facts, with clear drawings on each page.

TALKING WIRES, by Clara Lambert (72 pages; Macmillan, $2). A book in two parts—description of how the telephone works, and stories placing it in the social scheme—profusely illustrated.

RAINBOW IN THE SKY, edited by Louis Untermeyer (498 pages; Harcourt, Brace, $3). Good anthology for children, arranged topically. Not much modern verse.

JAUFRY, THE KNIGHT AND THE FAIR BRUNISSENDE (124 pages; Holiday House, $2). An authentic troubadour adventure retold in charming translation.

ALL SAILS SET, by Armstrong Sperry (175 pages; Winston, $2). Introduction by William McFee. Delightful tale of clipper-ship days and "The Flying Cloud"; convincing style and good illustrations.

IN THE SADDLE WITH UNCLE BILL, by Will James (290 pages; Scribner's, $2). This author's latest Western adventures of boy and girl on a ranch—sure shot from 9 to 11.

THE GOOD MASTER, by Kate Seredy (212 pages; Viking, $2). Story of boy and girl, set in Hungary; not too much atmosphere; colorful illustrations.

CHILDREN OF THE HANDCRAFTS, by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey (192 pages; Viking, $2). History stories of early America. Good materials and attractive illustrations.

STREET FAIR, by Marjorie Fischer (216 pages; Smith and Haas, $2). Two American children in Paris; will be very amusing reading in spite of the few French sentences.

Ages Twelve and Thirteen

BOY ON HORSEBACK, by Lincoln Steffens (258 pages; Harcourt, Brace, $2). A selection from the famous autobiography. Highly recommended.

FORTNIGHT SOUTH OF SKYE, by L. A. G. Strong (218 pages; Loring and Mussey, $1.75). The coast of Scotland is the scene of a good fishing story, in "Tales of Action" series.

NATIONAL VELVET, by Enid Bagnold (303 pages; Morrow, $2.50). Girls and horses in an amusing English setting. Girls should not miss it.

DRUMS OF MONMOUTH, by Emma Gelders Sterne (288 pages; Dodd, Mead, $2.50). The American revolutionary period as a vivid backdrop, against which is placed the story of a sensitive young poet.

BEHIND THE STORE WINDOW, by Jeanette Eaton (314 pages; Harcourt, Brace, $2.50). A consumers' guide for younger readers—photographs.

THE SEA FOR SAM, by W. Maxwell Reed (360 pages, Harcourt, Brace, $3). Men and fish; interesting information and modern theories as to the formation of the ocean, movement of currents and tides. Clear and scientific.

BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY, by Charles R. Knight (120 pages; Whittlesey, $2.50). An illustrated, dramatic primer of the time of early man. Beautiful photography of museum murals. Adult style but interesting.

PARADE OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM, by Dr. Robert Hegner (664 pages; Macmillan, $5). 700 photographs. Animal life; written by a student, teacher and leader of scientific expeditions.

This list of new books recommended for children was compiled by Jessie Stanton and Ellen Steele, of the Coöperative School for Student Teachers. Miss Stanton selected the books for younger children; Miss Steele those for ages nine to thirteen. The recommended books will be displayed during the month of December at the Child Study Association 221 West 57th

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Way Down East

Silas Crocket, by Mary Ellen Chase. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

DEDICATED to the "seafaring families of Maine and to their descendants, who still retain within themselves the graciousness and the dignity of their heritage," this book outlines the story of a tenacious Maine family from the early nineteenth century down to the present. Silas Crockett, the first in line, is a sea captain of the prosperous China trade. Nicholas his son is captain of a coastal trader. Reuben of the third generation is forced to pilot a ferry boat and sell the splendid furniture and portraits of his fathers in order to make a living; and Silas of the fourth goes to work in a herring factory.

Except for the death of Nicholas, who freezes in a crow's-nest, there is no violence here. There is no sin or passion or regret, and no admission of the inner decay, the narrowing of horizons, that has accompanied the commercial decay of the Maine coast. All the emphasis is laid on the Maine tenacity, which survives perfectly to the fourth generation. Miss Chase tells her story with reverence and delicacy and Yankee precision. There is missing from it the sadness you would expect in a story of declining New England, the peculiar sadness of those gutted houses that your headlights touch when you are driving back to Boston from the north. But even sadness would have seemed inadequate. For the glorious seaboard of the China trade means to most of us now a four-way turnpike and a few brilliant old women and the main-stem girls in Portland and empty harbors and fugitive mill towns and the smell of the tourist camps and a cretin at a gas station. And all this, to Yankees of the new generation, is a story less for reverence and delicacy, or even melancholy, than for immense indignation and wonder.

JON CHEEVER.

Revolt in the Balkans

Express to the East, by A. den Doolard. Translated by David Cornell de Jong. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $2.50.

THE ROMANTIC atmosphere of guerilla warfare with its inane bravado, its intrigue, its reckless courage and terrible cruelty, is vividly transcribed in this story of Macedonian conspirators and their struggle for independence from the Turkish and Serbian yoke. Although the book is a novel, taking the usual liberties with the historical facts on which it is based, still it gives a true picture of the turbulent Balkans.

In July, 1903, a revolt against the Turks breaks out in all the Macedonian villages. The members of the Drangov family distinguish themselves as leaders in the cause of their people, eventually paying for their loyalty with their lives. Damian, the oldest brother, poisons himself and his comrades rather than surrender to the Turkish soldiers. Later his Macedonian fatherland is freed from the Turks, only to be seized by the Serbs and ravaged by the guerilla warfare between bands of Serbian and Bulgarian freebooters. In this warfare, his daughter Milja plays an important part, for she is now a member of IMRO, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization; she is the mistress of the leader himself. But the leader is murdered by his own men, as a result of his effort to make an alliance between communists. Milja Drangov dedicates the

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"Express to the East" is one of the most sanguinary books produced by our sanguinary era. It spares no detail of the incredibly savage struggle that still continues over Macedonia. Yet it is not merely a book of death. The people of the story are vivid and thoroughly convincing; the prevailing mood is their feeling of desperate nationalism. The analogy with "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" is obvious. "Express to the East" is less unified in tone, more journalistic; it ends on a note of futility; but at the same time it is sturdier and closer to the real struggle it describes.

BARTHOLD FLES.

The Years Before Hitler

The Last Civilian, by Ernst Glaeser. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $2.50.

THIS NOVEL, written by the author of "Class of 1902" (at present exiled from Germany), is an account of those years of storm, stress and demagogy immediately preceding the final cataclysm that put Hitler in power.

Johann Kaspar Bauerle, the author's "last civilian," returns after an absence of forty-five years to his home town in the Rhineland, there to pass his old age in the atmosphere of liberalism and democracy he believes to have been created with the establishment of the Republic. He arrives in the small city of Siebenwasser just as the National Socialist movement is beginning to show its claws. Young Brown Shirts goose-step through the streets, smashing Jewish shops and breaking up Communist meetings. The town is awash with Nazi demagogy, riddled with intrigue, while all Germany prepares to accept a slavery more humiliating to the human spirit than any that could have been imposed from without. Johann Kaspar attempts no resistance, but when the forces gather and at length invade the domains to which he has retired, when his daughter's lover is driven to suicide over charges of homosexuality brought by certain unscrupulous Nazi leaders, he sells his estate and returns to his adopted home in America.

Though the author, as one may readily surmise from the title of the volume and this brief outline of it, is opposed by temperament and conviction to the mass hatreds enflamed by the Nazis, his interests throughout this book are pyschological rather than social or economic. His characters, save for a few minor ones and the "last civilian" himself, are active in the National Socialist movement ("socialism of the heart"), yet the author treats them with a sympathy that at times borders on deference. For one beyond the pale of pseudo-Nordicism, it is difficult to sympathize fully, as Glaeser evidently wishes his readers to sympathize, with the agonies of a young storm trooper who finds his father's family tainted with Jewish blood. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how the author can so completely ignore the social background of the Nazi movement or utterly fail to mention the parties in opposition. It is perhaps unjust to criticize Glaeser for not writing something more than a novel—it would be in this case if he were writing only of love over the tea cups. But Glaeser is describing a social cataclysm, the greatest since the civil war in Russia. He would describe it better if his sympathies were less confused.

Aside from these criticisms, there are episodes in the book written with great simplicity and brilliance, there are Germans who breathe something besides fire, and occasionally through the mists of an inadequate translation there be-

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DICTATORSHIP in the Modern World

Edited by GUY STANTON FORD

Dean of the Graduate School, University of Minnesota

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Rain in the Cumberlands

Fish on the Steeple, by Ed Bell. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

IT SADDENS me just a little to think of all the young American novelists who can never, never go back to the towns where they were born. They knew too much about their neighbors, they wrote too candidly, and now they are condemned to wander in perpetual exile. Ed Bell may have to join them, after writing "Fish on the Steeple." At any rate, I can't quite picture him going back to Smithville (pop. 886; county seat of De Kalb Co., Tenn.) and addressing a business men's luncheon at the Campbellite church. I can't picture him being invited in any capacity except that of victim to a meeting of the local Ku Klux Klan. That is a pity, too, because he found more people in Smithville who were violent, uncouth, profane, lecherous and generally suited to the needs of a local-color novelist than he is ever likely to find in his travels over the habitable world.

There was Ott Bonman, leader of the Klan, who rubbed his fat paunch and habitually addressed it as if it were another person, also named Ott. "Well, well," he would say, "I guess Ott had better git along to her beans. If she don't get her beans at the right time she don't feel well." There was Birdmouth, the town prostitute, who would have been a beautiful woman except that all her teeth were pulled, so that when she laughed "she was like a young bird opening for a worm." There was Cap'm Man Redmon, who spent his days cursing and stomping in the brickyard and his nights a-tomcatting after Birdmouth. There was Miss Pete Fraley, the hotel keeper's beautiful daughter, who, on a rainy afternoon, went to bed with the Cap'm Man's son. She was a good girl, a devout Campbellite, but ever afterwards when it rained she longed for Shackle Redmon. Surrounding these people and shaping them, there was the town itself, a town so poor that hardly anybody had enough to eat and the only practical source of income was burning houses down to get the insurance.

In the last analysis, I suppose the book adds more to American social geography than it adds to literature. It leans heavily on Faulkner and Caldwell—on Faulkner for the melodrama and violence of a decaying back-country town; on Caldwell for the humors of adolescent love and lewdness. Still, in applying their methods to a new background, Ed Bell has made discoveries of his own. He gives an admirable account of the year's round in an old-fashioned brickyard—the slow tautening of nerves as the work proceeds, the crazy bursts of temper under the August sun, and then the emotional release in early winter, when the kilns are fired. Meanwhile the love affair between Shackle and Pete has been rising from awkward flirtation to a grotesque poetry of desire and unfulfilment. In December, Shackle is sitting in Birdmouth's cabin while the rain beats down on the Cumberlands. They are drinking white whiskey from a Mason jar, and Birdmouth is crying because her little boy is gone and her friend is gone, and Shackle is crying too.—"You right drunk, sugar," Miss Birdmouth says. "You sure are. You drunk and hearin the rain makes you cry for Pete. You want a sleep with Pete with it rainin outside, and Pete hears it too wherever she's at. Mark my word, sugar——" Just then the door opens and Pete comes in, her face dashed with rain and ghostly pale. She takes off her green slicker and tosses it on

A Season's Run

DURING the fall publishing season the books that come to the attention of a weekly reviewer appear at the rate of three or four a day. They come, so to speak, from all directions; they represent a bewildering variety of contemporary cultural and political trends and an even more remarkable range in quality and intensity. Most of them, of course, belong to that popular literature of distraction and fantasy which has not yet been seriously studied and analyzed, but which nevertheless exerts its influence on the books that are consciously intellectual contributions to the problems of modern society. Most of them are readable, if you like to read; and even the most superficial of them contain fewer essential untruths, in their accounts of human motives and desires, than an average morning newspaper. Their influence is insidious; every reviewer has had the experience of looking back, after he has expressed his enthusiasm for one of these soulless, well proportioned and brightly painted little volumes, to reflect in dismay: "Is that the book I spent the night with?" and to wish he had handled the problem somewhat differently.

If you are reading most of the stuff that is published, the literary world appears at first as a vast welter, formless and incoherent, a great mash of conflicting ideas and impressions, of superficial or carefully considered judgments, of irresponsible or deeply studied views of contemporary society—and any developments that you attempt to isolate within it may seem a mere arbitrary imposition. But gradually it becomes clear that in one book after another the same themes are being repeated; the same problems are occupying writers whose talents have nothing in common and whose temperamental differences are extreme. You also become aware that developments which formerly, it seemed, took place from year to year, are now taking place almost from month to month. You cannot check over the intelligent novels of the fall, for instance, without noting the number of them that deal with the Negroes; and in every one of these books the Negro is pictured as much more thoughtful and determined—to name two qualities—than the quaint, picturesque, childlike Negroes who figured in the novels that Julia Peterkin was writing a few years ago. In "The Jungle" the Negroes who appeared to break the strike in the stockyards were never characterized at all; in Erskine Caldwell's "Kneel to the Rising Sun" and Grace Lumpkin's "A Sign for Cain"—works that are politically as advanced, in relation to this period, as was "The Jungle" in its own time—Negroes are definitely pictured as leaders, quick, resourceful, courageous, perhaps with the courage of desperation, in facing situations baffling to their white masters.

Developments of this type, however, are material for a book on the Negro in American literature rather than for a hasty summary of the season's creative writing. But there are a few tendencies sufficiently well defined to permit of more general groupings. There is, first of all, the lamentable collapse of a number of those writers who, only a few years ago, were being hailed as the creators of masterpieces and the leaders of American culture—novelists of the type of Willa Cather, Ellen Glasgow, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, whose latest books have revealed their inability to deal with the emotional and practical problems of the contemporary world in even the most elementary terms. The works of Willa Cather have always seemed to me to have

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peopled with stock characters who move through stock situations and who die, unexpectedly and accidentally, to bring the story to a ramshackle conclusion. At one point Miss Cather does attempt to face the modern Middle West—one of her characters is a banker who is presented as being ruthless with the farmers as a result of his disappointment in love—but after five of the six characters die he has a change of heart. Ellen Glasgow's "Vein of Iron" is a much more durable work; her people are more vital and varied and interesting, and they come up against problems —the War, unemployment—that force them to reach into the reserves of their experience and understanding for strength to keep going. But that—to keep going, even if it is in hopelessness and misery—is evidently all they want; and when at the last Miss Glasgow pictures her impoverished family retreating to the hills to start over, the vein of iron in them seems considerably less heroic and admirable than she tries to make it.

The gap between these writers and the younger novelists is as great as that between the post-war and pre-war generations. The literary life is full of scandals, but it has witnessed few more awkward spectacles than that of eminent critics attempting to bolster up such fatigued writers as, in particular, Miss Cather and Miss Roberts, for whom the crisis has obviously been so much too much. Since most of these critics have already been compromised by the clumsiness of their log-rolling, these attempts have lost them the influence that they might have maintained with the younger generation. It is significant that the first attack upon them, written by Mary McCarthy and Margaret Marshall in The Nation, came from two young writers who merely quoted their own words to expose them. But the immediate effect of this discrediting of the elders —for these instances are merely illustrations of a general development—has been a break in the continuity of culture whose consequences are already apparent. The debauching of critical standards by the log-rollers and publicity men, a general disgust with the "vulgar and desperate scramble" of the literary life, a resulting skepticism as to the value of criticism, has produced a kind of modern nihilism that Erskine Caldwell summed up when he explained that the value of his novels arose from the fact that he did not read any books.

Most of the proletarian novels published this fall reveal the lack of any consistent critical guidance—not in the sense that the books were not reviewed, but in the sense that their authors suffered from a feeling of alienation from the cultural heritage, or had not been made to see the relevancy, to their own work and their own ambitions, of the work that other writers had accomplished before them, and whose traditions they were, whether they knew it or not, carrying on. A conscious avoidance of the writing of the past may produce, as in the case of Caldwell himself, a freshness and unexpectedness of observation and imagery; but it may also lead to weaknesses of taste, and to a kind of forced unsophistication that is as much a pose, in its own way, as the super-refinement of the esthetes. William Cunningham's "The Green Corn Rebellion," although it has a memorable description of a grimly futile revolt of Oklahoma farmers during the War, is the clearest illustration of this danger, since the book is packed with extraneous details, some of them revolting, whose pertinence is never clearly established. In another sense the same weakness is apparent in John O'Hara's "Butterfield 8" and in Ed Bell's "Fish on the Steeple"—although neither of

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and overemphasize the kind of realities that their more squeamish predecessors have avoided. This reaction is understandable enough; but it is the problem of art to include what is shameful or coarse or barbarous in experience without surrendering to the desire to produce a mere emotional revulsion.

There have been half a dozen proletarian novels ranging from brief and fragmentary sketches of a waterfront strike in Seattle, in "Pier 17," to the intricately organized and politically enlightening "A Sign for Cain," by Grace Lumpkin. The best of these books, I think, is James Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy. I did not like these books as they appeared individually, since I thought Farrell had imprisoned his characters in a single mood of fatigue and boredom; but reading the three volumes gives a pattern to the monotony of the individual episodes, and the book has a cumulative impact of power and intensity. The problem that runs through the novel is that of individual guilt for the wretchedness and demoralization that are harped on so steadily; and the solution, with its intimations of some less sterile and frustrated life of which the ruined Lonigans were not even aware, seems to me to be grained into the story without affectation or shock. . . . "The Anthology of Proletarian Literature" is too large and formless a work to be commented on briefly; it certainly gives an impression of vigor and initiative. If the young writers who appear in it are compared with those who appeared in "The American Caravan" in 1929, the difference in their mood, in their subject matter, in their approach to their writing, is so remarkably apparent as to suggest that a kind of cultural secession has taken place in the past six years.

One consequence of the discussion of proletarian literature has been that the middle-class novelists have begun to write of social and political subjects—or rather to introduce into their fiction, into conventional stories of modern moral confusions and enlightenments, discussions of political issues, almost as though they doubted the significance of the kind of situation that seemed adequate a few years ago. "Deep Dark River" belongs in this category; but the same development is revealed in Frederick Wight's "South" and in Raymond Holden's "Chance Has a Whip." "South" is not a very good novel; it is a routine story of an artist and his wife who meet a bunch of tough Georgia aristocrats, with the usual complications in the way of both casual and distressing infidelities. But in the midst of it the author abruptly drops his domestic drama and takes his characters into the lives of the mill workers, into a confused and not very sensible strike, and into interminable discussions of communism, fascism and the future. "Chance Has a Whip" is a more careful book, but its plot goes to pieces in much the same way and, apparently, for much the same reason. It is the story of the love affair of a sensitive individual who, although he seems temperamentally fitted to act as an editor of Time or The New Yorker, is incongruously cast as an executive in a steel mill; but running parallel with the love story, interrupting it and robbing the book of all unity, even the unity of tone or mood, are scenes of strikes, of long and implausible talks with labor leaders—there have been a dozen novels this fall in which similar descriptions and dispersions occur. They seem to indicate that middle-class writers have come to doubt that the experience of their own class is adequate material for fiction that strives for any dignity and significance.

The proletarian novelists and critics may indeed be more effective for the time being in stimulating other writers

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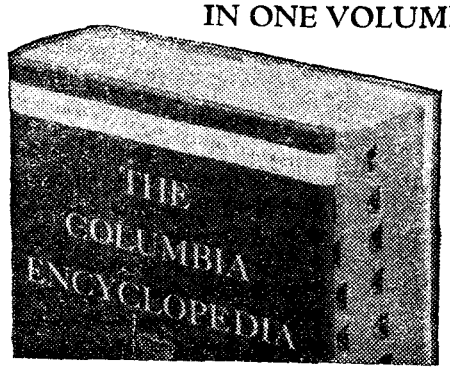

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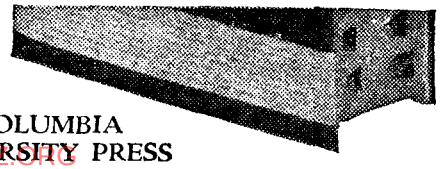

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England, A. J. Cronin's "The Stars Look Down" and James Hanley's "The Furys," suggest that this is happening there. "The Stars Look Down" is written from a radical-humanitarian point of view; it does not give an impression of great depth, or of offering any particularly original contribution, but it is written with a sort of narrative fluency that you find in the romances of a good popular magazine. When this sort of skill is used to tell a story of coal miners, of a general strike, of the flooding of a mine, the effect is impressive—"The Stars Look Down" is about the most exciting novel, in the sense of being good swift melodrama, of the season. "The Furys" is the first volume of a triology dealing with an Irish family living in an English seaport; it is a desperate, curdled sort of book, filled with an intense emotion never blazing out into a vivid statement that would justify or account for it.

Sinclair Lewis' "It Can't Happen Here" is too complex a work, both in terms of his own career and in terms of its influence on contemporary fiction, to be placed in this category; yet it is suggestive of the fiction of the future that Lewis has abandoned the kind of material on which he once based his writing to turn to a political novel, and one that is directed against fascism. Politically the book seems to me misleading. You would have to be pretty far gone not to be opposed to the kind of fascism that Lewis pictures; and it can be taken for granted that American fascists are not going to wear their swastikas on their sleeves or expose themselves quite so candidly as the Minute Men, the sadists and gangsters of his gallery. Essentially the book seems to transfer into the realm of national politics the attitude that Mencken expressed in the field of culture—only a nation composed exclusively of backward Baptists of the sort Mencken delighted in ridiculing could surrender to the barbaric invasion of Buzz Windrip and his gang.

There are two interesting novels—H. L. Davis' "Honey in the Horn" and Robert Briffault's "Europa"—that fall outside the scope of this article. "Honey in the Horn" is a description of Oregon backwoods life, full of quaint characters and bustling activity, but never getting anywhere. It might have been a great novel if it had succeeded in being a novel at all. As for "Europa," it is a vastly entertaining book, but it pictures a kind of upper-class intrigue and international decay that is much more realistically described in an astonishing series of autobiographies: Mabel Dodge Luhan's "European Experiences," Elizabeth Drexel Lehr's "King Lehr and the Gilded Age," Marguerite Harrison's "There's Always Tomorrow," Harold Stearns's "The Street I Know" and Mary Heaton Vorse's "A Footnote to Folly." The generation of journalists, spies, art patrons, social leaders and labor leaders that is producing, cell by cell, this collection of contemporary portraits, is giving a more suggestive picture of the blackmailing and throat-cutting world we live in than any individual novelist. To read them all—together with the autobiographies of Lincoln Steffens, Vincent Sheean, Gompers, Haywood and Clarence Darrow—is to get the synopsis for a "Remembrance of Things Past" in which the characters are all real people in close or direct contact with the major events of their time.

Most of these autobiographers knew one another; their lives crossed and recrossed in an amazing fashion. The Robert Minor whose arrest for seditious activity in the American Army in France was described in Steffens' book, was investigated by Marguerite Harrison, who was then in the Intelligence Service. Mrs. Stan Harding, who figures as a strange, ambiguous character in Mabel Dodge Luhan's Florentine villa, reappears in Marguerite Harrison's book as a captured British spy in a Soviet prison, ac-

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cusing Marguerite Harrison of having betrayed her. The drama in these books is largely between the lines. They are all public documents, so to speak, telling what can be told, in Mabel Dodge Luhan's phrase, "without hurting anyone's feelings"; their revelations are accidental, when they contradict one another, or when a variety of accounts, dealing with the same incident, suggest an interpretation different from that of any other narrator. They are all dominated by a sense of failure and frustration. Taken together they explain, more than any group of critical studies, the roots of the sickness and despair that sap the American intellectual world of its vitality and its leadership.

ROBERT CANTWELL.

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ROBERT CANTWELL, author of "Laugh and Lie Down" and "The Land of Pl[illegible]" is [illegible]

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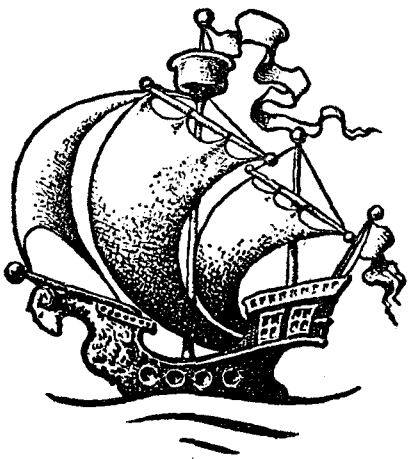

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